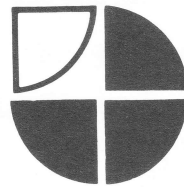


# MISSION FOCUS



## Toward a Theology of Marginality and of Anabaptism in Central America

GILBERTO FLORES

### Converging at the margins

I have always taken two ideas as most basic to the Anabaptist community—hope and equality. There is a reason for this. At the margins of society, stubborn hope and the practice of equality are essential for survival. And it was from the Anabaptist experience of marginality that their reflections gained poignancy and their movement found its power. After all, in the reign of God, the margin turns out to be the center of action.

Although the Anabaptists did not have the opportunity to articulate systematic theology, their concept of the church was explicit. It was a communitarian ideal that proposed a community based in Christ; a community of those who are converted, baptized, and committed to one another; a community free from the state; a community of service; an egalitarian community; a missionary community; a community that puts love into practice; an eschatological community.

The Anabaptists did not snatch their ideal out of thin platonic air, however. Two founts of inspiration nurtured the Anabaptist understanding of church:

*A communitarian reflection on the Bible.*

*An examination of the historical moment.*

In other words, they reread the Bible together, in a way that was pertinent to the reality that was theirs to live. Their focus and their response were outward-looking; their strong ethical emphasis came directly from a common search to live out their understanding of the reign of God in time and space.

Central America today is forcing many of us to do the same. As we together reread both the Bible and the Anabaptist witness, we have no choice but to take seriously our historical moment and the harsh daily reality of our people. Our rediscovery of Anabaptism is no accident. Historically, there is a convergence.

The appearance of the radical movements of the 16th century accompanied social phenomena that have tremendous similarities to Latin America today. The Protestant Reformation unleashed a process with incalculable political, religious, and economic implications. Nonetheless, the status quo, as the majorities experienced it,

changed little. The well-to-do could still play the game of easy faith with no moral commitment. The existing inequalities of society remained abysmal. Poverty, ignorance, and superstition among the popular classes went hand in hand with the wealth, power, and exploitation that the nobles, lords, and clergy exercised over the people.

### The strategy of the alternate community

The emergence of Anabaptist and other minority groups was a profound attempt to find specific solutions. The Radical Reformation manifested all sorts of tendencies. Some expected quick solutions while others sought to build an alternate community testifying with its ethical model that the world can be different.

In one way or another, however, the life of the Christian community itself came to be a protest. To be a faithful community in the midst of a concrete system that is anti-God, anti-faith, anti-reign of God, is decidedly difficult. But that is the heritage and testimony that Christ left us and we must resist the temptation to contemporize it falsely.

There are people who think it useless to hope and to prepare for a better future here on earth. There are Christians who believe it impious to do so. These people believe that the purpose of current events is chaos, disorder, and catastrophe, and therefore they retire with resignation or devout escapism from the responsibility to continue living—to rebuild for coming generations. As Bonhoeffer once said, it may well be that the final day dawns tomorrow; then, yes, we will be ready to stop working for a better world, but not before.

The gospel call of Jesus Christ is not simply cultic or religious language in the traditional sense. Rather, it includes the political and the social. If we believe this we must be consistent and expect that this call contains principles, strategies, and mechanisms that apply to daily life.

I believe, therefore, that the Anabaptist concept of the church should present itself as a concrete strategy of peacemaking and social change. Negatively speaking, we must consciously reject the hysterical fits and seductive shouting of the violent. Positively, the option we present should be clear, credible, and capable of being carried out with both efficiency and honesty. Above all, our strategy must be relevant and specific to our time. After all, that was Jesus' style. Fundamental to this strategy and this style are:

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—a critique, in life, action, and word, of the powers of the world;

—a sense within the community that suffering, and those who suffer, are of value;

—a search for authenticity, since no strategy is credible if the group itself does not implement it;

—a voluntary, visible community that operates without coercion and without a domineering leadership;

—a worldwide vision that opens the church and the gospel to every culture, and is ecumenical in this sense.

On the basis of these premises the communitarian thesis is—by itself and in itself—a strategy for changing society.

First, the community, by reason of its very nature and the motives that give it existence, is a *community of hope*. To be such a community will never be easy. But hope should impregnate its life and testimony, expressing with joy its transcendent faith, involving itself in the search for change in society. Hope is not hope unless we struggle with it in those places that seem hopeless and next to those who have given up hope.

The community builds its hope on the promise of a better world, which we find in the Bible and visualize through Jesus' messianic testimony. In this sense, the church is always utopian. In the literal sense of the word, the church announces that which it has not yet reached. Yet this promise of a better world is altogether timely, for it gives sense to our current struggle. The hope that sustains the community proclaims that the unjust powers will not be forever; that by the power of Jesus Christ the reign of Satan is overcome; and that this community will only obey and be faithful to its Savior. Through this hope the community locates itself within the values of God's reign.

Second, the Anabaptist alternative projects an *egalitarian community*. It does not just offer hope, but promotes equality amid hope. The greatest of injustices, and the mother of them all, is the despising of God's human creation. Since the world so cheapens life by tolerating vast, inhuman disparities, an invitation to equality has tremendous social implications. The church, as a sign of a new society, awakens in people the desire to respect and be respected. It restores religion as a means of well-being, not coercion. It promotes, responsibly and justly, the elimination of exploitation, which it confesses as sin and shame. It insists that women cannot be considered inferior. It declares that the church does not consent when human pride ignores the laws of the reign of God.

As it lives out these alternatives, then, the church calls on society to reconsider certain basic assumptions. It offers political and ideological options that are essential to society's own life—freedom of conscience, tolerance toward dissidents, the free interplay of ideas, limits on the kind of power that disposes of others' lives, and the voluntary association of men and women in search of a common good. Above all, the church reminds society that people, not institutions, are the goal of all its endeavors.

### The dynamic of the marginal community

Actually, I prefer to speak of the marginal community, not the alternate community. Negating the status quo is not an end in itself, after all. What is primary is that the church identify with those whom society excludes, impoverishes, and strips of power. To build community, to be the church in marginality, will automatically generate alternatives. But it may not even be possible to be an alternate community except from the margin. Leonardo Boff has reason to suggest that to liberate, one must live the liberating

process among the marginalized, seeking to free the freedom that is captive there.

The implantation of a community that speaks to society

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out of its marginality will always be inexplicable for groups that are established within the system. In the first place, politically speaking, this community implies a conscious disobedience. It does not accept the authority of an oppressive system, which stimulates despair. Oppressive groups always appeal to the loss of hope. Despair is their strategy for domination, the real aim of their repressive apparatus. But a community of hope prefers to suffer rather than to compromise. Within its disobedience is a political attitude, a rejection of the system. Hope itself is the first act of rebellion.

Out of its marginality the community fights with weapons that the opponent knows nothing about, not even how they work. The community goes to the marginalized, popularizes faith and makes it accessible to them. By opening the doors of faith to the people and turning the Bible into a tool of reflection rather than simply a liturgical document, it teaches new disciples to use the weapons of peace.

In the second place, on the ideological plane, this community permeates and makes inroads into the world of ideas. It goes not with the force of ambition, but through the courage to suffer for its faith. It stands as a witness, not a shareholder, in the sinful system. Since the kind of Christian community we are describing is incomprehensible to many people today, it wins not through persuasion but through suffering.

In synthesis, this is a community whose actions and very life assault—which is not the same as violating—society to create a conscience and to dialogue toward a structural change. There is no greater prophetic accusation than that of a committed brother/sisterhood which succeeds in generating hope, living out God's justice in the midst of social chaos. The marginalized poor, the persecuted, those who weep regardless of the cause, encounter a new dimension of life within the community of God's reign, which shelters them and strengthens them in their process of finding solutions.

Throughout the ministry of Jesus we observe that those who assimilate his message are people who are simple, yet are conscious of the concrete reality in which they live. As they look at Jesus' ministry, their concentration is on the immediate. Their questions for Jesus are eloquent:

"Will you restore the kingdom in this time?"

"Are you the Messiah?"

"Are you the one who was to come?"

"Can my sons sit at your side when you inaugurate your reign?"

The disciples considered Jesus Messiah, founder of a kingdom and transformer of the society of their day. Their reactions to him fit the human psychology perfectly. When people with immediate, pressing needs encounter a possible way out they seize upon whatever they can grasp immediately. No wonder they asked him on various occasions to defend their rights with force.

It is difficult to comprehend the fact that one can achieve much of anything from a situation of marginality and apparent weakness. But that strategy was the Lord's, and it triumphed. The first Christian church was marvelously strong when it was weak. The first Christians learned that in living after the style of their master they would successfully fulfill his charge. In contrast, those in a strong position in human terms will not want to give up the position they have reached, and embrace the changes that God's project involves. So sociologically, Jesus' strategy makes sense.

There is so much to learn from the marginality of the Christian community! To be marginal, to go where there seem to be no options, is to offer ourselves as an alternative on the periphery. It certainly is not flight from the center of action. The situation of the majorities in Latin America is that they live on the periphery of power, wealth, and influence. But the center of action is not the center of power; it is at this margin. Here at the margin the flow of well-being seems nonexistent. Yet it is from this environment that one is saved, is redeemed, and transforms the social world.

Violence in Latin America is born in the fear of valid changes that the majorities demand. A church is peaceful when, by the force of conviction, it implements strategies that testify, challenge, and condemn the horrors this violence has wrought. A community will not be a peaceful community simply because it does not commit violent acts; that is negative pacifism, or passive-ism. A community is peaceful when it strives to create conditions of dignity in the world.

Some ask: is it possible to be a pacifist and speak of pressure? As Christians the principles and values of God's reign are to rule us. Consequently, we view the world from a distinct perspective. We cannot let the forces of custom in the environment where we carry out our activities dominate our lives. We have been called to fulfill a special charge: to be witnesses, to proclaim God's reign, and to insist on the urgency of repentance. But we cannot do any of this from the armchair of our personal salvation, as if social evils will fix themselves either without us or in spite of us.

Pressure is necessary, not as a violent act, but rather as an act of denunciation. We cannot be pacifists in our communities only, while letting the world continue violating others outside our borders. This is not marginality, but escapism. Living in peace is not enjoying my tranquillity while the world rots. My shalom is not complete without the shalom of my neighbor, which comes through confrontation, repentance, and reconciliation. Hence the idea of struggling for peace. Marginality is to be where the marginalized are, it is not to marginalize or separate ourselves in the sense of leaving the reality that surrounds us.

On the other hand, we should not simply apply pressure, we should reconcile. To denounce and criticize that which is going badly in society does not solve a thing. We may simply be one more divisive element creating chaos. The Christian community should promote reconciling links, building bridges that humanity can cross in the mid-term future. So it is that we circle back again and again to the community itself as strategy.

### Costs to count

There is a weak point in all that I have said. *We are the weak point.* We are human beings. To attempt any peace-making strategy, it is important to understand the risks, to know how to run those risks, and to pay the corresponding price. We have to count the costs. When Christ wanted to "be our peace" he paid the price of the cross. As Ron Sider has said, "Those who have believed in peace through the sword have not hesitated to die. Why do we pacifists think that our way—Jesus' way—will be less costly?"

To oppose violence with nonviolence involves conflict, whether we like it or not. It will bring consequences, whether we like them or not. We must be ready to continue being this alternate community, with its peaceful,

egalitarian and hope-filled ways. But we must know that to achieve these objectives we will need to speak out our peace. We must know that to oppose evil, war, and the mechanisms of injustice can bring death, jail, and exile.

Many of us have received death threats. The temptation is to leave our countries, to flee before they kill us, to abandon the struggle on behalf of others. And it is only the first temptation. So when we preach these things people nod and say, "Okay, are you going to stick around?" In the 1970s, as we discussed strengthening our peace witness in Central America some of us challenged the Mennonite missionaries: "It is fine to talk about peacemaking but are you going to flee to the U.S. embassy when the first bullets fly?" But now some of us are getting the same question. It is easy to invite others to be peacemakers, and when peace grows impatient, to seek the cover of the embassies. The problem with my thesis is that we cannot be sure the community will remain united. Where are the members of this marvelously sane and egalitarian community we propose?

Yet our duty points farther still, out beyond this community toward the great mass of humanity living under ferocious yokes of inequality and pain. Perhaps one of the deficiencies currently evident in communities who identify with Anabaptism is that they have lost their active witness, and are content with a passive witness. We in Latin America have been quick to criticize rich North American

Christians who now have status and are no longer pilgrims. They are afraid to lose what they have got. But how many of us who call ourselves Anabaptists in Latin America also have status by now? How many of us want to lose it? To witness for peace can mean pain, rejection, and even death, which is obviously hard to accept willingly. No wonder there are Christians in Chile who believe Pinochet is God's chosen answer for their nation, and have signed numerous documents to that effect.

Many Christians, to be sure, are aware of the problems they face yet still confess that they would like to do something different. A Franciscan friar told me one day in an airport: "We Christians say we are a majority in Latin America; when will we sit down and say with our attitude that we will no longer obey that which leads to injustice? The day that we do this," he added, "they may kill us but the world will shake."

Our only hope is in remaining close to those at the margins.

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## A Catholic's Response to Gilberto Flores

RAFAEL LANDERRECHE

Whenever there is an ecumenical meeting, there is the wonderful sensation of finding oneself at a family reunion where the brothers and sisters have not seen one another in a long time. That feeling exists in the superlative when a Catholic working in base communities finds himself among brothers and sisters of the Anabaptist tradition. It is almost a case of twins. I find here the roots of what we are trying to do in our church right now. For in Latin America, as Gilberto has said, conditions are again being reborn that are quite similar to those at the sixteenth-century birth of capitalism in Europe.

I have had some opportunity to study the evangelization of Mexico in the sixteenth century. Disgracefully, it was in large part compromised by support for the conquistadors. There were only a few honorable exceptions. One of those exceptions was that of an early bishop in Mexico, Vasco de Quiroga, also known as Don Bosco.

I have discovered that Vasco de Quiroga's pastoral work responded to a great extent to this same communitarian movement in sixteenth-century Europe, of which the Anabaptists were a part. Unfortunately, it was squelched in much of the Roman Catholic Church. But there is an anecdote from the life of Vasco de Quiroga that is rich in symbolism.

As bishop, Vasco de Quiroga was invited to the Council of Trent. He had already been organizing communities of Christian life modeled after the primitive church, build-

ing on the communitarian model in which "the multitude of believers had all things in common." He traveled to the port of Vera Cruz, found his boat had just sunk, and returned home. I believe it must have been the Holy Spirit that blew across the waters so that he would not go to Trent. Had he fallen into the counter-reformist spirit there, it would have suffocated the communitarian spirit he was breathing into the Mexican church.

What Vasco de Quiroga did has an important application today. The Spanish conquistadors had not found gold in the streets, as they expected. They needed to get it out of the mines. And for that, they needed plentiful manual labor. Then as now, the poor were the base of the socioeconomic system, and to withdraw their support would have left the system tottering. But that is what Vasco de Quiroga did with the indigenous communities of western Mexico, the Tabascos. He organized them to work for their own subsistence, to feed their own families in a way reminiscent of the shalom in Isaiah 65, where no one builds houses, or plants fields in vain. By forming communities upon the model of Christian community, by inaugurating shalom throughout the region, he was taking away the foundations of the Spanish colonial economic model.

Though we may rightly describe these communities as nonviolent (for they sought a peaceful path rather than acting with direct aggression against the Spanish) they still elicited a violent reaction. But the worst crime they committed was to be a place of refuge for those who fled forced labor in the mines at the hands of the Spanish.

The Conquest continues in Latin America even now. Exploitation of labor and extraction of our natural resource-

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es continues. But the alternative community continues to be a strategy of struggle. The intention of the base communities is nonviolent, but once again their very existence provokes violent reactions against them. The dilemma they face is evident in the oscillation within some base communities in Latin America today between nonviolent and violent defense of their rights.

Let me share a sociological observation we have discovered as we reflect upon our communities in Mexico. There are two types, or two levels of community. One is by nature an urban expression of Christian community. But it might be better not to call these communities "alternate communities." They are not able to implement strategies that are full alternatives in the face of the capitalist system of oppression, because the resources simply aren't available in the city. So they are communities of defense.

The other type are rural communities more along the lines of Vasco de Quiroga or even, I believe, along the

lines of the communities of immigrant Mennonites in northern Mexico. These Mennonites may seem very closed, but they do comprise an economic alternative that implicitly says, "*I am not manual labor for the capitalist system; I now work to build and feed my own community.*"

Since the greater part of our communities do not have the option of withdrawing from the capitalist system, or creating work throughout the city, they offer instead various kinds of defense—such as consumer cooperatives—against the worst affects of oppression.

Let me finish by noting the great potential of the base Christian communities as alternate communities such as brother Gilberto described. In the Catholic Church there is a lot of talk about "holy obedience." But in our communities we speak of "holy disobedience." It is in community that this must emerge, lest holy disobedience turn into my own personal caprice. It is in community that we must challenge a system that asks obedience for its own well-being.

## Mission Strategy and the Reinvention of the Church in Latin America

GERALD SCHLABACH

*The formula's precise, the formula's concise,  
The formula for salvation in Christ:  
It's faith in Jesus Christ, trusting in his work,  
believing and following behind.  
—Latin American Evangelical chorus*

*Traveler, there is no path  
in traveling you forge the path.  
—Antonio Machado*

Is there one "precise formula" for mission in Latin America? Or is the poet right in saying that only in walking do we forge the path?

There is no shortage of strategies for Latin America. We have strategies galore. But not all of them coincide with God's overarching strategy. Some, in fact, serve to distance God's people from God's intention. Instead of bringing holistic salvation to people, they promote even more efficient forms of exploitation. They are strategies not of life, but of death.

### Historical perspective: strategies of death

The foremost example comes from the introduction of Christianity into Latin America. The strategy behind it was well defined; its theological base was well thought out. It is difficult to find words of sufficient force to describe the Conquest: Cross at the service of sword. Sacraments of penitence and eucharist to calm the consciences of the conquistadors. Mass baptisms of the new subjects. Greed and lust for gold. Massive enslavement of the Indians. And each arriving boat brought missionary

monks who evangelized America with burning zeal, yet sacralized the Conquest—making it possible to say that the cruel effort actually benefited the very victims being massacred by sword, hunger, and sickness, for they had now gained eternal life.<sup>1</sup>

Still, we should not dismiss the missionary work associated with the Conquest so easily. To cross dangerous seas to a strange continent, these monks must have known a white hot evangelistic motivation as searing as their companion's lust for gold. And remember: during the 16th century the Catholic missionary orders were the only Christians crossing the seas to evangelize in any way. The missionary clergy of Spain and Portugal were Christianity's first self-conscious missiologists.

*And quantitatively, the church did grow!* The tragedy of the Conquest is closely linked to its success. Both its tragedy and its success sprang from the same font—a "precise formula" for evangelization and salvation. The same theology promoted both the eternal salvation of the soul and the killing of the body. Behind both was an elaborate theology defining salvation as that which guaranteed, at whatever price, the eternal destiny of the soul.

But what is chilling is that when we turn to the history of the Evangelical (Protestant) missionary effort in Latin America, we find that its theological font is not as different as we might think. The formula varies somewhat, but its precision is just as sharp, able to slash body from soul.

I remember my surprise when I had recently arrived to work on a reconstruction project following the 1976 earthquake in Guatemala. When I asked a young workman on the project whether he was a Christian he responded, "Well, no, you see, I haven't raised my hand yet."

What is going on? We talk of the "Plan of Salvation" and "The Four Spiritual Laws." And in place of the sacramental formula of the Catholic Church we have the verbal formula for reciting a confession that one is a sinner, a prayer for forgiveness, and an invitation that Jesus Christ live in one's heart. Of course, as a heartfelt cry, this

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prayer can be authentic. But if we step away and look objectively, we see that it easily becomes a reductionist formula. If we reduce commending ourselves to the Lord to a "concise formula of salvation," and if it only takes us to heaven and not to our neighbor, have we not merely substituted one ritual for another?

No doubt about it: *The church has grown! The strategy works efficiently!* But how to evaluate this fact? To see its dynamic, we do not need to repeat the historical convergence of religious, military, and economic influences penetrating Latin America. Through this convergence the United States has competed, undercut, and in some places displaced the hegemony that Europe and Roman Catholicism once enjoyed. These days U.S. evangelists urge support for anticommunist military regimes from El Salvador to Chile.

But actually, we need only compare the ordinary strategies of Protestant evangelism with the commercial strategy of Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola unleashes a massive promotional campaign. The Evangelicals fill the stadiums for an evangelistic campaign. Coca-Cola offers World Cup '86 toys to those who save their bottle caps. The Evangelical congregations offer special music and prizes to those members who bring the most visitors. Then, to follow up, Coca-Cola distributes its product to all the *pulperias*, or tiny general stores. Meanwhile, Evangelical ecclesiology nearly reduces the congregation to a *pulperia*, whose only purpose is to dispense the preaching of eternal salvation.

I recognize that I am drawing a caricature. The Spirit and the people have known how to rise above such deformations of the gospel. If the Pentecostal churches have multiplied so vigorously, it is not due to, but in spite of, an alienating foreign theology. The Spirit and popular wisdom are able to transform a spiritualistic gospel into an earthly space for fraternal relations, mutual aid, and community.

Still, the caricature that does not tell the whole truth does throw into relief a major truth. The precise formulas inflicted on Latin America, the strategies Catholics and Protestants alike have long used, impoverish both the people and the gospel itself. One more strategy will not do.

### What then is God's strategy?

Allow me an illustration from the sports world. To master all the techniques of baseball, to train one's hands for batting and throwing, to master all the strategies of playing on a team of nine—will be of little use to a soccer player! There are eleven on the team, one uses the feet, and the field of play has an entirely different structure. The athlete will need to develop techniques that match the structure of the activity we call soccer.

In the same way, our strategies must find their orientation within the general framework of God's strategy vis-a-vis humanity. We will have many techniques and strategies, but what is primary is that we test and orient our strategies—whatever they may be—according to God's overarching strategy. *What then is the structure of God's salvific activity within history?*

If we must present a "Plan of Salvation" we should look first in Genesis 12. Yahweh calls Abraham, promising him blessing, but does so with a purpose. The people that spring from Abraham are to be a blessing to all other peoples of the world. No fact of salvation history is more fundamental. When Christ arrives, the author and finisher of our faith does not replace, but instead rescues that pur-

pose which God initiated in Abraham, the father of faith.

God has a universal longing and purpose. Genesis locates the call to Abraham within the context of this universal action of Yahweh in all the earth, and among all its families. The first eleven chapters of Genesis present the creation of both the earth and its nations. They present the genealogies of the nations, theologically locating all races, tribes, and families within the intention and supervision of God.

Upon approaching Abraham, God had decided on a well-defined strategy. With a view toward saving all humanity, God focuses the divine action by means of a particular people. God seeks to show divine care and universal intention in a way that is all the clearer for being lived out in the flesh. The intention is not that this "chosen people" hoard God's grace, love, and justice.

Some sociologists and historians tell us that the bearers of true social change are always minorities. They do not refer to those tiny elites who exploit the masses, but precisely the opposite. They refer to those groups that emerge from the people, but develop a consciousness and a creativity only sustainable within an alternative history. Though their higher level of commitment renders them a minority, these groups incarnate changes favoring others.

To be such a minority, however, implies a cost that we generally prefer to avoid. It will cost us to leave our Urs, with Abraham. It will cost us to wander as pilgrims in the earth. It will cost us to believe that God can still build that new city, that new order founded on justice. And most of all, it will cost us to live cut that alternative history in the face of the pressure, temptation, and deceit of the old history. The nation of Israel, precisely in trying to avoid this cost, continually attempted to convert its election into blind nationalism and exclusive religiosity.

*But the people of God is not an end in itself. And when it stops living for other peoples, it undermines the very purpose of its existence and election.* Since the call of Abraham, the structure of God's activity in history has never varied. Neither the blessing of Abraham, nor the formation of God's people, is an end in itself, but a means. The church is central for all of God's purposes, for it is the quintessential Abrahamic minority. Yet for that very reason the church ceases to make sense if it does not live for the world—for other peoples, for the masses.

### In search of an Abrahamic model for today

The traditional Roman Catholic strategy supposed the Christianization of the majority—the evangelization of society as a whole. Hence the concept of a state church. Hence mass baptism, even forced baptism, of the original Americans. Hence the Catholic Church's traditional social strategy of educating the elites, in the hope that they might retain some moral concepts when it is their turn to govern.

On the other hand, the traditional evangelical strategy is pessimistic about the religious sensibilities of both the masses and the elites, and expects to Christianize only a minority. Hence the outstanding image of the church as the ark of Noah, floating safely above the lost and filthy society God is punishing. Hence a ministry centered around the "*templo*," that refuge under siege from the world in which Latin-American evangelicals carry out so many of their Christian activities.

The truth of the majority is that God loves and cares for all of God's creation, but when the church tries to influence society as its domineering Great Lady, she usual-

ly ends up adulterated and dominated instead. The truth of the minority is what we have already seen—it does not exist to hoard, but rather, to extend the blessing of God.

In order to rise above the traditional impasse, we need to do two things at once, even though doing two things at once is a continual struggle: 1) Create and renew a creative, prophetic, servant minority—committed to Jesus of Nazareth, not compromised by the current system. 2) Maintain a high hope that God will put our efforts of suffering service to use in fulfilling what the church always fails to do through the force of domination: rescue and transform all of society, all of creation.

Is there no model residing somewhere between the traditional ones—an example of a minority that lives for the majority? Many of us believe that Anabaptist theology and history offers elements for rescuing the evangelical strategy from its self-imposed state of siege. Anabaptism encourages a social commitment that is eminently biblical and does not lay aside the human need for a personal encounter with Christ. But to avoid all danger of importing one more strategy, let us search for an Abrahamic model that is surging from the culture and popular wisdom of Latin America. We will find it in the base Christian communities that have emerged within the Latin American Catholic Church during the last thirty years. These base communities have succeeded by responding to the two most urgent needs of their historical moment.

Internally, the Catholic Church has been experiencing a crisis due to the shrinking number of clergy and religious. Externally, the poor majorities of Latin America have found themselves in increasingly desperate situations in spite (or because?) of so many development projects “from above.” The base communities have provided a coherent and integrated response to this confluence of factors, thanks to a growth of biblical reflection without precedent in Catholic Latin America. They renew the spiritual and congregational life of a key sector of the Catholic Church by way of broad lay participation. They provide a space to become aware of the oppressive reality and to join a communitarian force “from below” by recreating those fraternal relations that society has undermined. At the same time they counter some of the worst effects of social marginalization.

Note the fruitful encounter between a minoritarian interest in renewing the church, and a majoritarian interest in transforming society! That same overarching divine strategy we find in the pages of the Bible has come near in thousands upon thousands of *barrios*, *aldeas*, and peoples. Though they are small groups that may not comprise entire local communities, they have taken it upon themselves to promote community projects ranging from potable water, light, and housing improvement, to land rights, agricultural cooperatives, and cottage industries—all with inspiration from biblical reflection and celebration of the saving presence of God among the poor.

There are of course infinite local variations among the base communities, and I don't want to fall into romanticizing them. Doubtless they retain many practices from popular Catholic religiosity that, however modified, leave some of us uncomfortable. But it is better to play soccer with half-developed techniques than to master them with precision only to remain on the baseball field.

While some observers stumble over details like Mariology, trusting in the salvific value of the sacraments, and linkage to Rome, some mission strategists seek to duplicate their success by imitating other more impressive

details—dynamic rereading of the Bible, shared leadership, meeting in homes, and perhaps political activism. This is not necessarily an improvement. If we merely adopt new techniques under the same obsession to multiply our own churches, we will continue sweating more to extend our own kingdoms than the kingdom of God. And the people quickly pick up the odor.

To take seriously the very first evangelizing message that God communicated to Abraham in Genesis 12, our own missionary message must engender faith communities that from their beginnings look beyond themselves. Any other strategy will take on traits of exploitation and triumphalism. Comprising a minority that lives for the majority, the base Christian communities encapsulate the overarching “Plan of Salvation” that has been a constant since Abraham. Can we say the same about our own congregations, young and old?

### **Ecclesiogenesis**

To speak only of historical, social salvation without inviting Christ to transform my own life, is self-deceit. The invitation to a merely personal salvation is no better, since it ends up reinforcing egotism, the very root of sin. Yet simply to combine is not necessarily to integrate. It is not enough simply to glue two gospels together—forensic salvation and social liberation, gospel in word and gospel in deed. Even those of us who are trying to communicate a gospel that includes peace and justice are not always ending up with a holistic gospel. How then to speak of both social salvation and personal salvation without implying that they are still two worthy but parallel and separate processes?

*We must allow the poor to reinvent the church.* Humanity was not made for the church, but rather, the church was made for humanity. If our institutional and cultic forms do not respond to the most pointed needs of the peoples, then those who are suffering will have to reinvent the church through new and unexpected ways of being the church.

The Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff has described how the base Christian communities have been provoking this kind of reinvention within the Roman Catholic Church. What he calls “a true ecclesiogenesis . . . being realized at the bases of the Church and the bases of society,” has ruptured the monopoly on ecclesiastical power that the hierarchical institution long held.<sup>2</sup> But let us beware of cheering too loudly from the balconies, either as free-church Anabaptists or as evangelicals who have long delighted in challenging the religious monopoly of the Catholic hierarchy. What about our own rigidity in structuring the community of faith according to certain Protestant schemes that by now are just as traditionalist?

The same idea in another form: For many years Mennonite mission boards have been gaining recognition as the vanguard in missiological practice in Africa, because they have had the flexibility needed to approach and relate to African Independent Churches. These churches have emerged without direct missionary influence, but with such poignantly African expressions of Christianity that many other missionaries consider them so syncretistic that they may not really be brothers and sisters in the faith. Nonetheless, a number of Mennonites have had the vision and openness to approach these churches with respect. The goal is not to turn these churches into Mennonites, but to serve them so that they might come to know the Christ of the Bible as the same Christ they have

already learned to know within their own culture, without hearing his name in the mouths of Westerners.

My question is: why is it so hard to do the same thing here in Latin America? Was Christ not present among the peoples of Latin America even before foreign missionaries or national evangelists arrived? Did he flee before the sword of the conquistadors? Must we introduce Christ from outside? Or can we help the people discover the one who is already present? The fact is, we should open ourselves to allow the people to evangelize us as well, presenting Christ to us anew according to their own sensibilities. Yes, some local situations may give birth to new churches bearing our denominational name. In others we may work within circles that already exist, even though they do not put off their Roman Catholic identities. In still others, completely new paths may open up.

Several years ago a young North American Christian couple named Bob and Gracie Ekblad came to the department of Comayagua in Honduras. Their hope was to work at community development. Significantly, however, they themselves did not even import agricultural techniques. Rather, they became apprentices to a Honduran peasant who had mastered techniques for high production using few imported inputs. Only later did they turn to the tasks of promotion and training. Now there is a network of twenty-five community committees in their area. Among the respective members and local promoters, some are evangelicals, some are Catholics—but in this case most people are suspicious of all religiosity, and avoid both evangelical temples and Christian base community meetings. The project, therefore, has not imposed any proselytizing agenda. Yet from the people themselves a thirst has

emerged to study the Bible as part of community meetings that have no ostensible purpose other than raising crop production. I would not dare to predict the direction they will go. "In traveling you forge the path." But Christ is present. Those who would never have recognized themselves as pilgrims have found him accompanying them on the road.

If Christ died to himself, in service to humanity but with no certainty that humanity would respond, we too can die to our ecclesiastical plans and let the Holy Spirit build the church in many forms and tongues. But we will have to follow our father Abraham, and our Lord the suffering servant and light of the world.

#### Notes

1. A note on terminology: I am using the term "evangelization" in the generic sense, in order to indicate any effort to bring the person, community, or society into line with the gospel, whatever theology or strategy may be involved. I reserve the word "evangelism" for that more limited process of communicating, whether in word or deed, some kind of challenge to personally believe. Therefore the forced mass baptisms of the Conquest are one form of "evangelization," though they often took place without any attempt at "evangelism." More positively, any effort of education, testimony, or political mobilization that promotes a society reflecting the values of the gospel would also be "evangelization" with or without directly "evangelistic" components.

2. Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis: Las comunidades de base reinventan la Iglesia (Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church)*, 4th edition (Satander, Spain: Editorial Sal Terrae, 1984), p. 62. Published in English by Orbis Books, 1986.

## The Poor Reinvent the Church: A Case Study

OVIDIO FLORES

In a rural Honduran community a group of peasants, or *campesinos*, had organized with the goal of soliciting land from the government in order to grow corn and beans, their nutritional base. Among them were five evangelicals from a Pentecostal church.

The *campesino* group held its meetings on Sunday mornings. Since they lived some distance from one another, it was the only time during the week that they could meet. But the hour coincided with the meeting of the evangelical church that the five attended. They were caught between the pressures of the group and of the church, both of which demanded their presence, without excuses, every Sunday.

Finally the day came in which the *campesino* group decided that anyone who was not committed to attending the meetings and cooperating fully with the group would have to quit. The following week only two of the evangelical *campesinos* showed up. All five had consulted with their pastor, who prohibited them from continuing with the *campesino* group. That same Sunday the church

excommunicated the two brothers who chose to go to the *campesino* group for having disobeyed the pastor.

The *campesino* group continued to seek to improve its organization, and bit by bit the group learned more about the lives of the two evangelicals who had decided to stay with them. Eventually, whenever they met, the first thing they did was ask Julian (one of the two) to read the Bible and pray.

Julian gained more and more of the group's trust, to such a degree that it eventually named him treasurer. In this position of leadership Julian learned more about the *campesino* movement, including other groups that had obtained land.

The request that the group had made for land did not meet with success. The government claimed there was no available land. So the *campesinos* decided simply to occupy the land they had requested. The Honduran agrarian reform law says that no one has a right to own land if they do not put it into production, and should go to those who will. The *campesinos* therefore believed they had a legal basis for their action and they knew from the experience of other groups that the government bureaucracy rarely enforces the law without such pressure.

Three days after occupying the land, a group of soldiers arrived at five in the morning to remove them forcibly. The group refused to abandon the land. Among those resisting was Julian and the other evangelical. Julian was

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captured, beaten, and taken to jail for ten months. During that time, none of the members of the church visited him, since as far as they were concerned his imprisonment was God's punishment. Nonetheless, the *campesino* group, in spite of its meager resources, provided for his family.

While Julian was in jail the group continued to try to obtain land, and decided to reoccupy the same land, this time with the support of other *campesino* organizations. Thanks to this *campesino* pressure the government entered into negotiation with the land's supposed owner, and the group was finally able to acquire it. Upon Julian's release he returned to find that his wife and three children were living on the same land where he had been beaten.

Julian had been reflecting deeply on the Bible during his months of incarceration and he returned with new force and new ideas. After discussing some of his ideas with the group, he began a literacy center that included Bible study. Some people met together so that Julian could explain the Bible to them. Others came to ask his counsel about family problems. Soon Julian was for all practi-

cal purposes the group's pastor.

With land, people's lives began to change. They had enough to plant not only for their own subsistence, but to sell and buy clothes and medicine. Julian continued to develop his ideas and began to organize a consumer cooperative, all the time maintaining his Bible teaching. Eventually an independent church developed not as a structure simply to bring people together for song, study, and prayer, but with a strong communitarian sense.

Cases such as this are being repeated in many communities where the Honduran Mennonite Church is now carrying out social programs. After two years of work, the *campesinos* have accepted and trust us. We are sharing the Word of God together. Some of the people have said, why not organize a Mennonite church? They have offered to donate land for a building. But we are not sure how to respond. We are afraid to undermine the sense of community that the church already enjoys, since many people continue to consider themselves Catholic, and the Catholic Church has also provided pastoral support.

## We Need You to Believe in Us

RAFAEL ESCOBAR

I believe that the core conflict in Central America is this: Those who rule over us—and I don't mean our local governments—look upon us as a single packet. The root of the conflict is that we have not been allowed to express ourselves.

What do we the Central Americans want? What do we want to propose as Guatemalans, or Nicaraguans, or Hondurans, to solve our own problems? We cannot answer this question until we can ask it. But others have overwhelmed us with their questions. Even the army, in this sense, has been manipulated, to say nothing of the church and the political parties. Manipulated by whom? Well, that isn't a secret, is it?

I don't believe that military strategies are what will move us toward a solution. Nicaragua isn't at fault. Guatemala isn't at fault. The conflict in El Salvador is not Salvadoran. These conflicts are manufactured conflicts.

We must not let the specter of East-West war deceive us. It doesn't exist! Or perhaps I should say, if the great powers want to fight out their differences, let them do it in their own lands. It is unjust that we here should have to support sociopolitical choices that are never going to bring us solutions. We are not an eminently capitalist country. Nor do we want to become a Marxist-Leninist country someday. Not at all!

As for our churches, what can I say? Too often the same things happen in our Mennonite church structures, at the worldwide level. Here too, we should be allowed to express ourselves. I'm afraid that many of the projects by the church organizations have not successfully come together, because those in charge did not start by consulting us, by hearing what we think. Instead they have invented a series of situations so that we would lose our place in society, our place amid the grave problems of our society.

Sometimes there does seem to be interest in doing cer-

tain projects in Central America. Thank God, to a certain degree the Mennonite church is committed, alive, and active. Nonetheless, what we Central Americans most want and need is to be allowed to think for ourselves.

Everyone, including the hemisphere's rulers, claims to want peace. If we are really going to draw up possible solutions, the place to start is that we be respected as persons—that we be permitted to express ourselves in society.

In Guatemala, for example, a space has apparently opened for self-expression. But there is still a lot of fear in the population. Our freedom is conditioned. We have always been conditioned. This is a tradition that weighs us down, that has weighed us down for many, many years. We have not been able to name those things that we simply cannot stand anymore.

So to summarize, I would say three things:

In the first place, it is time that we be treated as persons. Not as cheap labor, but as persons.

In the second place—and it is worth repeating—give us the opportunity to express ourselves, to search for some channel of dialogue, which is the thing we most lack in Central America. It is so difficult to do; it can cost you your life. It is that simple.

At present, only those with power express themselves. So we need models that encourage us to express ourselves—to say those things that pain us, that we don't like, and as if that weren't enough, to express our heartfelt longings as a people.

We are simple people. We don't have enemies. We don't look upon the Sandinistas as horrible ogres, all hairy and ugly. Not at all! We see them as human beings. We see them as our brothers. That we as Central Americans make mistakes, that conflicts exist, that we have problems, that we have our own idiosyncrasies and issues to work out—of course we do. But they are ours! Let us express ourselves. Let us communicate among ourselves.

In the third place, there is no use speaking of a certain socioeconomic system that will come in and provide the

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solution for Central America. Of course we need an economic system, a political system, a system of civil rights and duties, all that is involved in being a nation. But what if we want to work out a different system? At present, we are forced to choose between what already exists, between right and left. No! As Mennonites we believe that there

are other options, kingdom options.

So, starting among Mennonites, let us begin by respecting one another. Let us take an interest in each other. I am more than certain: we don't just need economic resources. We don't just need money. We also need you to believe in us.

## Toward a Methodology of Action for Peace from Mesoamerica

The present document seeks to gather together the concerns, proposals, and strategic guidelines that emerged as a result of the Consultation on Peacemaking Strategies (Consulta Sobre Estrategias Hacia La Paz) held in El Hatillo, near Tegucigalpa, Honduras, August 22-24, 1986. This encounter—organized by the Peace Portfolio which the Honduran Mennonite Church and Mennonite Central Committee sponsor—brought together an ecumenical, interdisciplinary, and international group of persons concerned and interested in the work of peace and justice in Latin America, particularly the Central American region.

The group was made up of participants from diverse Christian traditions—Catholics, Mennonites, Quakers, Moravians, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians—from various countries—Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mexico, the United States, and Canada. The participants represented a diverse set of activities and working areas: church commitment, ecclesiastical administration, pastoral work, nonviolent action, social work and action, social sciences and peace research, theological reflection and education, and administration of international service organizations.

The objectives of the consultation included laying the groundwork for a regional methodology of action for peace and justice, through clarifying various specific strategies and the working areas which are current priorities, in response to the need for peacemaking in the countries of the area. At the same time, the consultation sought to integrate such efforts into coherent joint action, making possible a wider involvement of traditions and organizations in the practice of peace and justice in our continent. The consultation's point of departure was the biblical vision of shalom. This concept provided the horizon within which we sought to understand justice and peace in the kingdom of God, demanding that we put shalom into practice and commit ourselves to its construction. . . .

In small groups and plenary discussions throughout the consultation, concerns and needs emerged as to ways to create conditions for the visible, anticipatory realization of shalom. Each concern shares the common longing among us to find practical ways to incarnate signs of shalom in the Central American context. At the same time, concerns emerged regarding the problems and obstacles that undermine the possible manifestation of shalom. We are aware that such obstacles come from outside the

church, but they also emerge within the church, and we ourselves form part of the obstacles. Following are four necessary fundamentals for initiating the way of shalom, with descriptions of the corresponding obstacles that must be confronted in order to open up the path.

1) **The need for communal examples that are a foretaste (of the changes we seek in society).** The construction of communitarian models of faith which visibly express relationships of shalom in concrete situations is urgent. We recognize that the ecclesiastical institutionalism in our diverse traditions constitutes a serious obstacle, when the authoritarian and vertical relationships turn into petrified structures that impede grassroots participation and commitment.

2) **The need for a socially conscious spirituality.** We need to create a spirituality anchored in the force of the Spirit and immersed in concrete actions of solidarity and commitment to those who suffer in the practice of justice. This search for a spirituality implies rescuing faith as simple religiosity and converting it into a dynamic capacity for obedience to the will of God. At the same time it means deepening our sense of God's Spirit as the font that makes social commitment possible. Finally, it suggests the need to recover worship, so that it is no longer an alienating act of subjective and individual experience, but part of the life of a community, renewing the life of the people of God.

3) **The need to integrate our common efforts in joint action,** directed toward developing our work for peace and justice. This urgent and visible need results from the absence of ecumenical and interdisciplinary relationships.

4) **The need to found our actions in and upon the truth** (of the Bible, and concerning our reality), all the while analyzing reality scientifically in order to transform it. Our ambivalence concerning change, and our unfamiliarity with national and international realities, constitute obvious obstacles. Both internal factors (the national communication media) and external ones (the low-intensity warfare inflicted on Central America) perpetuate these obstacles.

In working groups integrated according to our common interests, we found concerns and needs for possible immediate action in various areas: the church dimension, national/international interchange, popular participation, and reconciliation at national and international levels. Out of this effort emerged more than fifty practical proposals for action, which were then integrated into seven spheres of concrete action. The order in which we present these spheres reveals the group's general consensus as to priorities:

- 1) Promotion of new, communitarian forms of faith.
- 2) Education for peace.
- 3) Promotion of ecumenical relations.

*Note: This article contains translated excerpts of a document coming out of the Consultation on Peacemaking Strategies held in Honduras, August 1986. Full copies of the document are available in English and Spanish from the Latin America Department, Mennonite Central Committee, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA. 17501.*

- 4) Scientific analysis of reality in relation to the changes we hope for and promote.
- 5) Participation in popular mobilization.
- 6) Mediation of conflicts at higher levels.
- 7) Lobbying and advocacy before authorities at various levels of power.

In these spheres of concrete work, we identified seven points of responsibility at national and international levels, which impinge directly on the commitment to take measures that help empower work in the various areas.

- 1) The faith community.
- 2) National church conferences in Latin America.
- 3) National church conferences in Canada and the U.S. (mission boards).
- 4) National commissions and projects [involved in social concerns] in Latin America.
- 5) Centers for theological and biblical education in Latin America.
- 6) Mennonite Central Committee.

7) Ecumenical organizations and international service and study centers in the continent . . .

Biblical shalom constitutes a vision and a horizon that is very rich and broad. It shows the way toward many spheres of action in the face of the immense and urgent challenges of Central American reality. Even while we yearn to take up all of these working areas, we recognize the current limitations on our ability to undertake such a far-reaching effort. The consensus of this preliminary consultation, however, suggests that our priorities for initiating this journey are the promotion of new, alternate forms of community, peace education, and ecumenical commitment. Notwithstanding, we affirm the possibility and commitment to undertake actions in the remaining spheres according to the skills and space that respective national churches enjoy in their concrete situations.

*Editorial committee:*

Raul Serradell

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## New Religious Movements: Contextualization and Church Growth

STAN NUSSBAUM

*This is the third in a four-part series on the significance of new religious movements in the third world for missiology and missionary preparation.*

This article and the previous one in the series are based on the hypothesis that new religious movements by reason of their nature and their very existence have radical implications for four key discussions in current missiology. Having looked at their implications for partnership and dialogue, we now turn to the other two issues—contextualization and church growth.

### Contextualization

Nothing is more agreed upon by virtually all missiological schools of thought than the need for contextualization. For example, one poll asked evangelical mission leaders to list the five most significant issues for Protestant mission work today. Two issues named were “more authentic cultural identification by missionaries, both in understanding their target groups and in communicating the gospel appropriately,” and “reaching the Muslim world through effective contextualization of the gospel.”<sup>1</sup>

The great missiological debate about contextualization is not whether to contextualize but what the term means and how it should be done. Robert Schreiter provides concise descriptions of the three basic approaches which he labels “translational, adaptational, and contextual.”<sup>2</sup> He then proceeds to spell out the theoretical framework for the approach he prefers (the “contextual” one) and illustrates how it works out in practice. Nearly all missionaries who receive training about contextualization will receive it in this way, working from theory to practice.

Few instructors realize that it is not the only way to study contextualization, and it may not be the best way.

A supplementary or alternative method is the use of case studies in contextualization, and not just studies of contextualization as it is done by missionaries with doctorates. New religious movements provide a fertile field for these case studies. What are they except attempts by local people to formulate a theology and religion more appropriate in a given setting than the alien form in which theology and religion have been introduced by outsiders?<sup>3</sup> If the new movements knew the word “contextualization” they might stand up and shout, “The only reason we had to come into being at all was that an earlier generation of missionaries did not know how to contextualize. We know how. Watch us. We’ll show you.” Missiology would be richer and missionary preparation would be better if the theoretical questions (What is contextualization? How should it be done?) were pursued in closer connection with the practical questions (To what extent are new religious movements contextualizing correctly? How does one discern contextualization correctly? How does one discern contextualization from syncretism? What can be learned from attempts at contextualization, even those which may look incorrect theologically?). There is plenty of written material about the new movements: the room next to the office where I am writing contains over 10,000 articles in this field. Unfortunately, few missiologists have enough specific knowledge of any section of this material to use it in their courses.

Suppose they did know. Suppose they did study new movements carefully. What they would discover is that the major areas where academics are trying to introduce contextualization are exactly the areas where new movements have been experimenting for a long time—religious experience, forms of worship, ethics, theology, and church organization. Let us look at a few of the intriguing paths which could be explored in this way.

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1. **Religious experience.** New movements almost typically start with a vision seen by a particular person. Many of them involve guidance through visions for ritual observance and daily life. Nearly all have much to do with procedures for healing, exorcism, and dealing with accidents and other crises. In all these areas Western Christianity, especially in its Protestant forms, has had very little to offer. The uninformed missionary even today will enter this territory tentatively at best, though the situation calls for serious interaction with these local realities.

2. **Forms of worship.** Nearly every new religious movement in the world has forms of worship more visually arresting, more vibrant, louder, and longer than the imported forms of Christianity in its neighborhood. Robes, symbolism, ritual innovation, seasonal feasts, all-night services, dance, processions, traditional musical instruments—the forms of worship in the new movements have been so obviously superior to the imported forms that they are copied increasingly by the mission-founded churches. Every missionary should be aware of this fact and should spend no little effort trying to figure out why this is so.

3. **Ethics.** On some issues such as the use of alcohol new religious movements often have a stricter ethic than mission-founded churches, while on other issues like polygamy their ethic would usually have much more latitude than mission churches. Their ethical positions may include food taboos such as the prohibition of pork; they may argue that the Bible says God has commanded that it not be eaten. The accusation of legalism is often made against these movements, however accurate or otherwise the charge may be. All these matters are indications that the new religious movements are struggling with contextualization at the practical, ethical level, not primarily at the theological level where so many of the academic contextualizers work. Both the ethical and the theological deserve attention.

4. **Creed.** Many religious movements in the third world do not clearly define a list of true beliefs and false beliefs or of required beliefs and optional ones. There is a whole cluster of questions lying around this observation. Must a religious movement have an explicit statement of faith if it is to be considered Christian? As a group defines its theological position, where is the line between contextualization and syncretism? What is conversion and how does it relate to creed? Each of these questions leads into a complex and important discussion which cannot be taken further here, but it should be obvious that the study of new movements is an excellent route into the fundamental issues in this area.

5. **Religious organization.** The one area in which mission-founded churches may have the most to learn from the new movements is the structure of church leadership. Church positions and titles multiply in the new movements, but so does the amount of church work that gets done, and so does the church itself. Has this hit home to missiologists? These movements are showing incredibly rapid growth in some cases and they are doing it largely without money. Most are small-scale operations without salaried administrators (the bane of mission development in the third world?) or even salaried clergy. They are redefining leadership roles, adapting some of the roles of traditional religious practitioners such as healers and diviners, and they make group decisions in a local style, not the "representative democracy" style which some mission churches introduced. Their major unresolved leadership problem is that of maintaining unity: the tendency

toward fragmentation is well known. Still, these new movements deserve attention as instances of religion "of the poor, by the poor, and for the poor." Any missiological champion of the poor must take these movements seriously.

### Church growth

The rapid growth of new religious movements has been noted above. David Hesselgrave has edited a book which builds on the assumption that "all true Christians who want to see the church of which Christ is the Head grow rapidly (should) be informed and challenged by these records of growth (in new movements)."<sup>4</sup> That is an important link between church growth missiology and new movements, but it is not the one I want to explore here.

Rather than seeing new movements as a model for church growth in the same way that they may sometimes serve as models for contextualization, partnership, or dialogue, let us consider how these movements shake some of the foundations of church growth thinking, especially as this is embodied in the "unreached peoples" emphasis currently represented by books such as Hawthorne and Winter's *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*<sup>5</sup> and institutions such as the U.S. Center for World Mission.

The following criticisms of unreached peoples missiology are not made from a hostile perspective. I happily admit that I have been influenced, instructed, and inspired by many of the aspects of this missiological school of thought, but I also must join the list of those in the Anabaptist and other traditions who still feel they "wish to probe further into the premises, principles, and goals of church growth . . . to open up fresh lines of inquiry—historically, experientially, methodologically, and theologically."<sup>6</sup>

New movements have implications for the statistical, theological, and missiological foundations of an unreached peoples missiology. Statistically, that missiology depends on a quantifiable analysis of the percentage of Christians in a given group. This percentage is the foundation for evangelistic strategy: groups with the lowest percentages are classified "unreached" and targeted for evangelism. How these percentages are computed is therefore a crucial question. New religious movements are a statistician's nightmare. They rarely have any membership statistics of their own. Many of their members may show up statistically as members of other churches. They frequently split. They grow and sometimes die quickly. Missionaries or others who are assigned to estimate their membership may be ignorant of and/or hostile to them.<sup>7</sup> Given these difficulties, one must have serious reservations about all the religious statistics which are used as the basis for unreached peoples mission strategy since they only represent the data of which the international Christian community is aware. A couple of African examples will demonstrate how misleading the data can be when new movements are either unknown or classified as non-Christian.

About four years ago a missionary couple was sent to northwestern Botswana to do pioneer evangelism among a tribal group which was classified as "unreached." Soon after they moved into the region they discovered that though there were no church buildings and no history of mission work in the area, the villages were riddled with small congregations belonging to a bewildering variety of



African independent churches. In Liberia a church growth survey in the early 1970s listed one area of Grand Bassa Country as 60 percent belonging to independent churches but only 2-3 percent actually converted. On paper this constituted an unreached people group, but in fact when missionaries of the Christian Reformed Church in the USA moved into the area to work with the independent churches they discovered the percentage of genuine Christians among them to be far higher.

Behind the statistical problem is the further and more serious theological problem of defining a conversion. The way a people group is defined as reached or unreached is to estimate the percentage of persons in that group who are either saved (reached) or lost (unreached). In God's eyes the line between saved and lost may be perfectly clear, but most humans do not find it so. What is a conversion? How do the point of conversion and the process of conversion relate? How does conversion relate to culture?

Missiologists are currently debating all aspects of the conversion question. A friend who teaches at Fuller School of World Mission mentioned in a recent letter that he had attended a conference at Harvard on the subject of conversion in Africa. He added, "It was a stimulating time, though we never did decide what we meant by conversion."

To many evangelical laypeople, any such ambiguity about the nature of conversion may seem to be a lot of academic double-talk about a subject which every ordinary person can see is crystal clear in Scripture. I can personally testify, however, that it was involvement with some of the new movements in Lesotho that helped me to realize that the understanding of conversion which prevailed in the evangelical tradition in which I grew up was not nearly as "biblical" as I thought. The Bible, it now appears to me, does not prescribe the nature of a conversion experience as precisely as most evangelicals do nor does the book of Acts indicate that a reached/unreached classification of an individual must precede any missionary approach.

The inadequacy of the standard evangelical distinction between converted and unconverted persons becomes obvious when we try to apply it to the "disciples of John" mentioned in Acts 19:1-6: were they converted in verse 1, or did they become converted in verse 5? I have tried in vain to find a group of evangelicals who agree about this, and their confusion rings true to life. In my experience with African independent churches I have met many people and many groups which fall into the "disciples of John" category.<sup>8</sup> It seems theologically and biblically untenable, missiologically unnecessary, and humanly impossible to label such people either "saved" or "lost." Our calling as missionaries is not to judge the current category to which a person belongs but to help people from whatever category they may be in toward the category of full discipleship.

Moving then from the theological to the missiological level, we see that the new movements shake the foundations of church growth strategy in still another way. All church growth strategy is based on identifying the "force for evangelism," that is, the committed Christians in any people-group who can be mobilized for evangelistic action, but members of new movements tend to get snubbed as non-Christian or overlooked as resources for evangelism. We need to look at a specific illustration which indicates how this occurs and how badly it may cripple

evangelistic strategy.

MARC is currently circulating a "Country Portrait Guide" to help participants in the "Vision 89" conference prepare religious statistics on their home countries following the methods used in Patrick Johnstone's *Operation World*. The draft guide includes Johnstone's section on Botswana, which is such a clear example of the problem that we must look at it in some detail.

Johnstone's definition of statistical categories<sup>9</sup> states that he has divided the "indigenous churches" of Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia* into two groups, one included in the general Christian figure and the other separated as syncretistic groups. This has two results: Those indigenous churches which really are Christian disappear in the list of Christian denominations in Botswana. No single indigenous denomination is large enough to be named there, though I would guess that together the many indigenous groups make up most of the difference between the total membership of listed Protestant denominations (46,000) and the "total Protestants" (58,500). The other result is that those indigenous groups which are not true churches stand out sharply in a separate group as "African indigenous churches" and are described as "mainly syncretic 'Zionist' and healing churches."<sup>10</sup> Unless one checks the fine print in Johnstone's appendix as I did, one will not realize what has happened and will assume that African indigenous churches are entirely a group in need of evangelism rather than a significant force for evangelism. A good missiology should identify all potential resources, not obscure them.

This will require more statistical precision about these new movements. When I suggested this to Thomas McAlpine, the Senior Researcher at MARC who is responsible for drafting the "Country Portrait Guide" format, his reply concluded, "We sense that already the guide is too complex rather than too simple, and I am not sure that we will figure out how to integrate this suggestion of yours without compounding that problem. Whatever, know that we appreciate this and will be worrying about how to do justice to it, if not here, in other efforts."<sup>11</sup>

The statistical, theological, and missiological problems noted above may all converge in the church growth tool known as the Engel scale, a scale from -7 to +3 where conversion equals the 0 point.<sup>12</sup> People are supposed to move from -7, "No awareness of Christianity" through various steps up to +3, "active propagators of the gospel." The trouble is that in the new movements, people appear to jump from -5, "Some knowledge of the gospel," straight to "active propagators of the gospel in the form they have understood and accepted it." Until one evaluates that form of the gospel, it is impossible to say whether these people are now -4, -1, +3, or some other number on the scale. In other words, without the necessary theological refinements, the scale is useless statistically and missiologically with respect to new religious movements. The development of alternative tools should receive serious attention from missiologists, especially those committed to church growth. In the war with the kingdom of darkness, no ally or potential ally should be overlooked.

## Notes

1. *MARC Newsletter*, 4 (December 1987) 3. The poll was taken at a meeting of the Society of Frontier Missiology in September 1987.

2. Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985), 6-16.



3. An early call for the study of African independent churches as examples of contextualization is Hans-Jürgen Becken, *Afrikanische Unabhängige Kirche. Oder: Gibt es für uns einen zeitgemässen Missionsdienst in Afrika?* *Evangelische Missions-Zeitschrift*, 28(4), 1971, 177-180.

4. David J. Hesselgrave, *Dynamic Religious Movements* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 10.

5. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981. This book is probably doing more shaping of missiological thought among American evangelicals than any other in the 1980s, especially through extension education courses and theological schools.

6. Wilbert Shenk, *Exploring Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), vii-viii. Shenk's volume includes essays by 22 different authors. For another sympathetic yet questioning treatment, see C. Wayne Zunkel, *Church Growth Under Fire*, (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1987).

7. David Barrett makes a concerted effort to keep new movements in view in his *World Christian Encyclopedia*, with vary-

ing degrees of success in different countries. For example, he projects a mid-1980 figure of 5,300 members for an independent church in Lesotho which I know has dwindled to less than 100 members. On the other hand, his mid-1980 projection for the entire country of Ghana has been shown to be almost 20 percent too low. (Personal communication from David Burnett of the Missionary Orientation Centre at Gerrards Cross, England. I have not yet seen the published version of Burnett's extensive 1987-88 survey of church growth in Ghana.)

8. See my dissertation, "Toward Theological Dialogue with Independent Churches: A Study of Five Congregations in Lesotho," D.Th., University of South Africa, 1986, 250-251.

9. Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World* (Bromley, Kent: STL Books, 1986), 499.

10. *Ibid*, 110.

11. Letter from Thomas McAlpine, December 14, 1987.

12. Edward R. Dayton, *That Everyone May Hear* (Monrovia, California: MARC, 1980), 45-47.

## In Review

*To the Golden Shore: The Life of Adoniram Judson.* By Courtney Anderson. Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1987, 508 pp., \$9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Shirley Klassen

Adoniram Judson was born and raised in a Christian home in the U.S. Although he rejected the principles taught by his parents, he came to feel uncomfortable with his beliefs and practices. Through the death of a non-Christian friend, Adoniram gave his life to God.

Judson felt God calling him as a missionary to Burma; however, no American missionary society was available to send him. As a result, he and several friends who also felt God's call to mission initiated the formation of a missionary society to support overseas mission work.

On February 12, 1812, Adoniram and Ann Judson sailed out of Salem Harbor to become two of the first missionaries from North America, carrying the gospel to far-off lands. Watching the shoreline disappear from view they could not foresee the impact of their journey on the future of the world mission movement.

Their first years in Asia involved a lot of moving, never knowing if or when they would get government permission to live in Burma or whether it was even feasible for the safety of their lives. Adoniram began translating the New Testament into Burmese, still waiting to go to the country for which he had been burdened for so many years.

The author includes personal letters and comments from the Judson diary. This helps the reader feel part of the life experienced by the missionaries—their hurts, disappointments, excitement, grief, and how they dealt with these.

After living through "Death Prison," losing several children and his wife, Judson questioned his motives for being a missionary. Had it just been a personal challenge to be the first American missionary to Burma? These were a few of the issues he dealt with before coming

to terms with his life purpose.

The power of God in Adoniram's life is brought out very clearly. In spite of his humanity, weaknesses, failures, God used him. The greatest work God accomplished through him in Burma was the translation of the Bible and the preaching of the good news of salvation.

*Shirley Klassen lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.*

*Theology and the Third World Church.* By J. Andrew Kirk. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1983, 64 pp., \$2.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Lawrence M. Yoder

Taking the church in Latin America as his sample, Kirk finds the theological revolution in the third-world church characterized by "critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word" (Gutierrez), and by "an attempt to elaborate the whole content of Christian faith from the perspective of the demands of social liberation" (Boff).

This revolution has been provoked by various factors. Kirk hears third-world sisters and brothers registering three key concerns. First, Scripture must be *subject*, not *object*, in authentic biblical interpretation. Committed believers realize the true meaning of Scripture when they are engaged in God's mission amid the pain and injustice of the real world. Contrast this to the isolation of the academic environment where the text quickly becomes the object of investigation and theorizing of scholars. Kirk believes with reason that theological education by extension goes a long way toward overcoming the inherent weaknesses of isolated, academically oriented training which by definition can involve only a select, relatively homogeneous and relatively inexperienced group.

Second, authentic mission goes beyond the current emphasis of Western missiologists on

respect for the cultures of the world. It begins, says Kirk, with a careful assessment of the "unchanging elements of the gospel," which can be applied in various situations to determine which cultural values correspond to the gospel and which are challenged by it. Northwestern churches need third-world Christians to help them discover in what ways our faith expression is syncretistic.

Third, authentic Christian theologizing is committed to Jesus Christ and the concrete changes that must occur as his kingdom "comes on earth as it is in heaven." It is committed to the whole people of God, and all the people in the world.

Kirk's very readable reflections on these issues deserve much more attention than they have so far received.

*Lawrence M. Yoder, former missionary in Java, Indonesia, is Associate Professor of Missiology and Director of the John S. Coffman Center for Evangelism and Church Planting at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Virginia.*

# Declaration Towards a Wholistic Transformation in Latin America

(Since 1969 the Latin American Theological Fraternity has served as a forum for Latin American evangelical theologians and church leaders to reflect biblically and contextually on the meaning of the gospel and its implications. The following declaration grows out of the December 1987 consultation in Peru.)

The participants in the consultation "Towards a Wholistic Transformation," sponsored by the Latin American Theological Fraternity, have met in the name of the Triune God in Huampani, Peru, from the first to the sixth of December, 1987, representing Christian service agencies in 17 countries on our continent, to share our experiences and reflections on the task which God has committed to us. In a spirit of brotherly love and of hope in the God of justice, we have resolved to issue the following declaration as an expression of that which his Spirit has revealed to us and of the commitment which we have made with him, in answer to the call that Christ has made to us in this conference, through our brothers and sisters.

We thank God for the work carried out by churches, groups, and movements which have put into practice in concrete actions the reflection generated by conferences before this one, such as CLADE I (Bogota, 1969), CLADE II (Lima, 1979), and others. In the fulfillment of a wholistic mission, the Spirit of God has been acting in our history to take us a step ahead today in the task which he is carrying out on our continent and in the world.

We believe that certain events, such as the search for peace in Latin America which found form in the conferences of Esquipulas II (August, 1987) and the meeting of eight Latin American Presidents in Acapulco (November, 1987), are indications of a historical moment in relation to which this conference ought to express itself in a declaration pertinent to these times. Therefore:

We affirm the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures which, because of their historical nature, ought to be understood today through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, on the basis of a commitment to the total mission of the Church in the context of our situation. We have heard the living Word of God, seeking to understand its message for our Latin American reality. As a result, we reaffirm our faith in the God who hears the cry of the people for justice in a context of injustice; in Jesus Christ, who is the model of solidarity with those who suffer and of service to the poor; and in the Holy Spirit, whose working in human beings produces changes which also reach out to the social reality.

Recognizing that the Church is not perfect and that it needs a continuous process of reform, we believe that she is the community by means of which God desires to manifest his Kingdom in history. This manifestation is seen, not only when the Church proclaims the good news in society, but also by means of her presence and those actions which reveal the Justice of God inherent in the good news.

We affirm that in the Biblical model of mission it is impossible to make a separation between Word and Deed and between Evangelization and Social Action. Therefore, we believe that Christian mission should produce a wholistic transformation which would affect all dimensions of reality.

We who are gathered here are participants in a pilgrimage in action and reflection which has been begun by others. We recognize that we are joined with them on a road of searching for models of wholistic transformation which reflect with ever greater fidelity the values of the Kingdom of God.

We have analyzed multiple projects which are part of this search. We recognize the necessity for an evaluation that includes criticism of our methods, which frequently reflect paternalistic attitudes inadequate for our social reality. At the same time, we affirm our conviction that the poor, whom we wish to serve, ought to participate actively as the agents of their own transformation.

We grieve over the destructive cultural interferences produced so often by missions, churches, and service agencies when they do not apply the Biblical model of the Incarnation or do not take the trouble to understand the cultural situation in which they work. We advocate the necessity of a greater methodological rigor which would respect the cultural identity of our peoples.

The diverse experiences in service among us who participate in this conference lead us to the conviction that today no one in Latin America can live his or her faith without being conscious of the pain and suffering of vast sectors of our peoples. We believe, therefore, that the struggle for justice is inherent to the life of faith, and this leads us to emphasize the urgent necessity for thinking about more adequate theological models for the Latin American reality and to act in concrete programs which take into account the following realities:

- a) the marginalization of specific human groups, such as women, children, native communities, and political dissidents;
- b) the foreign debt of our Latin American countries, denouncing those policies which only increase the impoverishment of marginalized groups and the enriching of a few, economic dependence, and the debt itself;
- c) violations of human rights and the use of terrorist tactics, especially those which are justified by appeals to the cause of the State, national security, economic and sociopolitical stability, violent social change, and religious arguments;
- d) the arming and militarization of our continent, particularly in Central America, which serves foreign economic and political interests alone, wastes our economies, attacks our ecological integrity, destroys our youth and destabilizes human communities;
- e) a responsible exercise of our stewardship over creation, taking great care that the use of natural resources be sensible and frugal, in order to achieve the highest quality of human life;
- f) the establishment of a relationship of reciprocity between foreign donor agencies and national service associations in making decisions about theological criteria, strategies, methodologies, objectives, and the management of financial resources.

These and many other situations reaffirm the call which we have felt from the standpoint of our faith, to involve ourselves with our brothers and sisters in a spirit of obedience to the Lord and of Latin American solidarity.

We are conscious of the urgent necessity for the people of God to support responsibly and prayerfully the Christians who are playing a significant role in the search for peace and justice in their countries. It is likewise urgent that the churches train and develop leaders to act in the social and political life of our lands in order to spread the influence of the Kingdom of God to all parts of our societies.

As a result of our experience together in this conference, we express our solidarity especially with the Peruvian pastors and laity who have been victims of terrorism and repression, with the Nicaraguan pastors and laity in the peace committees, with the Chilean Christians who are committed to the search for peace and democracy, and with the Christian leaders responsible for their people in this hour of demonic violence in Haiti and El Salvador.

In a spirit of humility and repentance, we dedicate ourselves anew to God, who loves and demands justice; to Jesus Christ, who loved us unto death itself; and to the Holy Spirit, who renews and equips his people, impelling them toward the fulfillment of their mission, to the glory of God.

All but one of the articles in this issue of *Mission Focus* originated in Central America. Each one reflects the ongoing struggle of the churches in that region to be faithful to Jesus Christ. The crisis that has shadowed Central Americans for a generation is generally reported to be a political upheaval. But it has engulfed all aspects of life for the peoples of the region.

It has become evident that this is no parochial affair. The region has been turned into one of the many theaters for ideological conflict between the superpowers. Prolonged conflict, in which local peoples increasingly perceive themselves to be mere pawns in a power game, leads to social and cultural crisis. Families, communities, and groups of people have been dislocated and are now living as refugees.

For hundreds of years the church has been on the scene in Central America. In this time of chaos and crisis, people are asking questions of the church: what is the church? for whom does the church exist? what is the relationship between the church and social/political realities? How does the traditional alliance of the Catholic Church with political power differ from the present enthusiastic support North American televangelists give to their favorite Latin American governments?

What is remarkable is that—whatever the sense of disillusionment or betrayal by the church in the past—there is a quest on the part of many Christians in Central America to discover for themselves the meaning of being the people of God today. This involves several points.

In the first place, it forces everything back to basics: what is the essence of the church? What is being widely reported and confirmed by what is contained in these articles, is that ordinary people are “reinventing” or discovering for themselves the reality of a local body of believers that gathers in Christ’s name for the purpose of worship, to seek the will of God for their lives, and to covenant together to live out the reign of God. This is the church of the people—the masses—which is discovering local responsibility and the joy of participation. Worship is not divorced from life. The experience of reading the Bible is still a novelty for many of these believers. And they are finding meaning in this exercise which eludes long-time readers.

Second, this situation focuses sharply the question of

what strategy the church should pursue in relation to the social and political realms. In a volatile circumstance there is no room for neutrality. Any appearance of standing aloof is interpreted as a sign of disloyalty or hostility. The churches of Central America are calling for positive engagement rather than withdrawal.

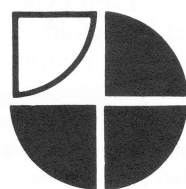
This leads to a third theme: what is the mission and purpose of the church? The writers agree that personal transformation through faith in Jesus Christ is essential, but they hasten to insist that this must be expressed in concrete discipleship that does not flee from the life and death issues facing their society. In other words, they wish to resist all the ways and means Christians have traditionally used to reduce the scope of the gospel to an individual salvation and ethic. The mission of the church, thus, is to be the church fully: proclaiming the fullness of salvation in Jesus Christ and providing that place where disciples find solidarity with each other in living out their faith commitment.

The fourth theme blends the second and third themes into one: the mission of the church determines its strategy. Inspired in part by examples from church history, especially the earliest Christians and the sixteenth-century Anabaptists, these writers argue that faithful discipleship requires that we make marginality our missiological key. The encounter between the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God is where the action is. This is perceived to be at the margin rather than at the center. For there to be a center there must be a margin, but the margin is the most exposed and vulnerable part. It is among marginal peoples that innovation and change is most likely to occur. The offer of salvation to those who have always lived on the periphery must be made in a way that brings encouragement and enables them to recover their full humanity in Christ. Those who evangelize in this way must, like Jesus, be “among you as one who serves.”

Stan Nussbaum’s article challenges the conventional wisdom about mission studies. Many of the New Religious Movements he has in mind are of a piece with the Base Ecclesial Movements the Central American colleagues represent. This is a happy convergence. If we take all of this seriously, it will involve fundamental reorientation of thought and action.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

# MISSION FOCUS



## Toward a Vision for Mission

JOHN H. NEUFELD

The task I have set for myself in this paper is to deal with the question of our vision for mission as conferences and congregations. I approach this question from a "church" or "ecclesiastical" perspective. Having worked as a pastor for eighteen years, I have experienced what Richard J. Neuhaus calls "the church in all its thus-and-so-ness, its contradictions and compromises, its circus of superficiality, and its moments of splendor" (Neuhaus, 1979:8). All of us could cite examples of contradictions, compromises, and superficiality from our own experiences. Yet I would like to affirm both the potential for and the reality of "moments of splendor" in the church.

I am convinced that the local church is an excellent setting for telling, doing, and being the community of good news. It is the primary setting in which we theologize on our understanding of mission. We can wrestle with the meaning and importance of mission in conferences and consultations, but if the local church fails to catch the vision these deliberations lose their value.

I intend to address our vision for mission in three ways: (1) point to the need for and value of an intentional, explicit vision for mission; (2) elaborate on a biblically based vision for mission; and (3) identify some implications of this vision.

### **Intentionality: its need and value**

The Findings Committee Report of the 1982 Council of Moderators and Secretaries consultation clearly identified some needs which point toward an explicit vision for mission. Several questions surfaced repeatedly: "What is the common vision underlying increased inter-Mennonite activity?" and "What is the overarching purpose within which inter-Mennonite agencies serve?" The 1982 report observed the "need to discover anew the biblical heritage," and the "critical need for peoplehood formation and strengthening identity."

It is important to become conscious and intentional about this overarching purpose as churches and conferences. It is not sufficient that "somewhere" there is a statement of our mission—in someone's file, or in a congregation's constitution. Such a remote relationship to a statement of mission is useless. Why? It is functionally inoperative, without impact. Goals, objectives, program strategies, and other details are unaffected by a statement

of mission filed and essentially forgotten.

The all-too-common situation is that, while statements have been written, they have no vitality in the present. "Unowned" statements remain inoperative. Michael Griffiths aptly uses the phrase "this strange amnesia" to describe the condition in which Christians individually and corporately have lost touch with their goals and purposes (Griffiths, 1975:9).

Many churches become "activity traps." Their full weekly schedules and their multitude of announcements give the impression that all is well. But the schedule of activities may be quite deceptive. Although "engrossed in activity they lose [have lost] sight of their purpose" (Lindgren, 1977:45).

The church's reason for being, its overarching purpose, must be consciously and repeatedly examined, restated, and reaffirmed or revised. A vision for mission must be owned and continually reowned to be functionally operative and valuable. David J. Ernsberger quotes John W. Meister: "It seems to me that the church in our generation suffers its most shocking lack of power from the failure of particular churches to define their reason for being" (Ernsberger, 1969:1).

The values of a mission statement are clear. It determines the general direction; it provides the broad and fundamental criteria, the principles by which both long- and short-range goals are prioritized; it is the basis for developing strategies; it provides for a meaningful evaluation of what is done. A mission statement is also the most effective basis for motivating the people.

Lindgren and Shawchuck insist that where there is no clear mission statement there will be confusion, fuzziness, frustration, and ineffectiveness. If the church wants to experience periodic "moments of splendor," it will devote time and energy to restate its vision for mission.

### **A biblical paradigm**

In keeping with the 1982 acknowledgment that "we need to discover anew the biblical heritage," I have chosen to wrestle with the question of purpose in such a way that both the process and final result are accessible to most church members.

The plea to "discover anew the biblical heritage" is expressed also in other Christian traditions. Gabriel Fackre wrote, "We have to discover the full saga of what God did, is doing, and will do," and "it is time to repossess the theological core" (Fackre, 1973:27). Bishop Theophilus of the Mar Thoma Church in India was asked, "What should the church in America do?" He replied, "Read the Bible!"

*John H. Neufeld is President of the Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This paper was presented at the Inter-Mennonite Consultation in October 1987, sponsored by the Council of Moderators and Secretaries.*



The material that follows is a study of the word "sent" to help develop a vision for mission for our churches.

Before the ascension, Christ gave his disciples a commission: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:21). It is my assumption that what Jesus told his disciples he continues to say to us, his body, the church. The church is sent into the world by its sending Lord. What does this sending mean?

An exhaustive study of the verb "sent" (in Hebrew *shalach*; in Greek *apostello*, *pempo*) with God (or synonyms of God) as subject reveals 234 instances—146 in the Old Testament, 88 in the New Testament. The term is found in all literary forms, in direct discourse. It is used with a wide variety of objects (grammatically): persons, groups of persons, spiritual beings, terms referring to the Word of God, as well as animal life, illness, and a number of miscellaneous conditions.

Analysis of these occurrences reveals that 145 out of the 234 instances involve the sending of persons or groups of persons. The greatest frequency of occurrences of this verb-subject combination is found in connection with three persons: Moses, Jeremiah, and Jesus. This observation led to a discovery of the possible meaning of Jesus' words to his disciples prior to the ascension, providing a solid basis for developing a vision for mission for the church. Jesus' words "as the Father has sent me" invite us to ask, how does the sending Father send his envoys into the world? This leads to a better understanding of the church's being sent into the world.

Upon closer examination of the textual evidence, the following items stand out. Each of these three figures stood at a crucial point in the revelation of God to his people. Moses (Exod. 3-4) was called by the Lord to work among his people at the time of their formation, their birth as a nation. The prophet Jeremiah was called by God to work among the people at the time of the dissolution of the nation. Jesus was called by God to fulfill his mission at yet another critical juncture in the people's history, bringing the new covenant into being (1 Cor. 11-25). These three figures were involved at times of covenant-making, covenant-breaking, and covenant-remaking.

Each of these persons was aware that he was sent by God. Each had a strong sense of call. Moses looked back to the experience of the burning bush in which he perceived the call, "Come, I will send you to Pharaoh" (Exod. 3:10). During the course of Jeremiah's forty-year prophetic ministry, the conviction grew in him that he had been called to the prophetic task before his birth (Jer. 1:5). Jesus, too, had a sense of divine mission, coming to expression at the time of his baptism and the temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 3:13-4:11). Each of these sent persons was called upon to prove that the call had come from the Lord.

There is a remarkable similarity between these three spokesmen in terms of the proclamation they were called to make to the people. Each was sent to proclaim that Yahweh was Lord. The phrase "that you may know that I am the Lord" (Exod. 7:17), repeated several times with minor variations in Exod. 7-14, was a challenge both to the people of Israel and to the court of Pharaoh. Moses' proclamation was a statement of faith, challenging the view that the Pharaoh was Lord and inviting the hearers to a like faith prior to the demonstration of its truthfulness. Jeremiah addressed his people at worship (Jer. 7:1-5; 26:4-6) and also spoke to his nation's leaders who were at war. The essence of his message was that Yahweh was

Lord of the people in their personal, social, cultic, and national life. Jesus proclaimed the priority of the kingdom of God and challenged conventional ways of viewing life, be that in reference to personal, social, religious, political, or economic matters.

The meaning of the proclamation that Yahweh is Lord is further expanded by noting that each of these *sent* persons represented a vision of peoplehood and of life that was breaking in upon the world in their time. This vision was eschatological and meant that those who embodied and represented it lived in the tension of the *already here* and the *not yet*. This is clearly expressed in Jesus' sayings regarding the kingdom of God. On the one hand, he stated, "The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15), and on the other hand he taught his disciples to pray, "thy kingdom come" (Matt. 7:10).

This summary, cursory though it is, is sufficient to show that these *sent* ones represented a radical breakthrough

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of God's judgment and grace directed at the people of God in worship; it was also directed to people enmeshed in social, political, and economic power structures.

The implications of this understanding of the church's mission are clear. Jesus, the sent one, addressed his followers as *sent* ones: "As the Father sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:1). It must be concluded, then, that the Lord calls the church to continue to serve as *sent* ones in the tradition of Moses, Jeremiah, and Jesus.

The question now arises, is there any evidence that the early church depicted in Acts and the Epistles accepted this vision for mission and shaped its ministry by it? Is it appropriate to suggest that the church today can or should claim such a vision for mission for itself?

The record of the church's life and work reported by Luke provides some interesting data. Luke selected incidents from the experience of the church and its leaders to show that the new order of the kingdom, the order that was coming, was repeatedly clashing with the old receding order. Several examples show that the church did accept the vision for mission and shaped its life and ministry in accordance with it.

Luke devotes nearly two chapters to the story of Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:10-11:18). The fact that so much space is given to it shows how important he thought it was. The account illustrates that the *sent* church broke the shackles of the status quo in regard to the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. Peter's initial refusal was overcome, and in spite of his inner confusion he went to the house of Cornelius, the Gentile. During his active ministry Jesus broke social conventions again and again, demonstrating the new reality of the kingdom. Peter and the church were coaxed to follow in the Master's steps.

Through this traumatic experience Peter learned what the Lord had in mind: Avoid showing partiality to any person. Years later, the church saw this experience as congruent with being sent and preserved the memory of the experience in Scripture.

The letter of Paul to Philemon also shows that the church accepted its *being sent* into the world as Jesus, Jeremiah, and Moses had been. The believers' grasp of God's mercy was limited and circumscribed, especially in reference to the institution of slavery. That there were freed men and slaves was viewed as normal, yet Paul, representing the vision of the coming kingdom, the *not yet*, knew that this was not right. He was convinced that he was called by God, *sent* to proclaim the new reality and to implement the vision into the experience of the church. This conviction motivated Paul to urge Philemon, Onesimus's master, to undertake an unheard-of action—to accept his runaway slave, not as a slave but as a brother. The text does not report what Philemon's response was, but it is probable that he followed Paul's suggestion, albeit with fear and trembling.

Years later when the church was debating which writings should be included in the scriptural canon, Philemon was included. The church realized that through these words of one man to another, God's Word was being heard with compelling clarity. The *sentness* of the church had again come to clear expression.

A third illustration that the church viewed itself as standing in the tradition of Moses, Jeremiah, and Jesus is found in Paul's letter to the Galatians. In Galatians 3:28 Paul summarizes his deepest insight in reference to racial, economic, and sexual issues: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male

nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This statement ran counter to the accepted notions of propriety of his time and challenged the status quo in the name of Jesus who had brought a new reality into human experience.

With these words the apostles challenged believers to rearrange their values and convictions and to implement the startling new reality in their midst. There were to be no separate churches for Jews and Greeks, no separate churches for freedmen and slaves, no separate churches for males and females. The first two of these were implemented in the first century, but the time was not ripe for the third to be implemented. However, in reference to all three, the vision was expressed, the insight shared, and the church urged to implement as part of its social reality that which was expressed as deepest conviction.

These illustrations confirm that the church viewed itself as *sent* by the Lord in the tradition of Moses, Jeremiah, and Jesus. In obedience to *being sent* into the world by its Lord and Savior, it addressed personal, social, and structural issues. The church caught the vision and boldly proclaimed a "disputed sovereign," combining word and deed, proclamation and demonstration.

The early church's vision for mission also served as the basis for the structuring of its life and ministry. The conviction that they were sent led them to shape their existence in a bipolar way: sometimes they came together, often they scattered. And both the gathering and the scattering were controlled by the vision. Their vision motivated them to come together for worship, fellowship, and instruction as well as to scatter into and penetrate their various stations of life with the message of the kingdom.

The primary task of the church is to minister in the world when scattered. This ministry, which is given to all, is facilitated by periodic gathering and by the ministry of the *set apart few*. This distinction is rooted in Ephesians 4 where Paul argues that "some," the few, are gift-persons to the church for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ.

The ministry of the *set apart few* is derived from and subservient to the ministry function of all believers. The ministry of the whole church is primary and basic; the ministry of the few is secondary and derivative.

In a primary sense then, the church's ministry occurs when it is scattered; in a secondary sense, ministry occurs when the church gathers. When gathered, a few will be involved in church work which makes possible and facilitates their coming together for upbuilding and strengthening. When scattered, everyone is involved in the ministry of being sent as Christ's representatives into the world.

### Some implications

The biblical evidence is clear: The living Lord revealed in Scripture is a sending God; Jesus was sent in the once-for-all sense and keeps on sending his followers. The church is called to be a peculiar community whose ultimate purpose is to serve others. Serving others is to take its cues from Jesus, Jeremiah, and Moses. In order to live up to its mission, the church gathers periodically so that it can scatter often. Alfred C. Krass has made the observation that Christians' lives "are exocentric rather than egocentric" (Krass, 1978:212).

This vision has implications for the whole church, but particularly, I believe, for the *set apart few* (pastors, etc.) who provide leadership in the local churches. The func-

tion of the *set apart few* is subservient to and derived from the ministry to which all Christians are called.

The pastors' task is to facilitate building up the body and equipping all believers for their ministry in the world. The ministry of the *set apart few* will concentrate on the church gathered, while the ministry of the many will focus on the community and the world.

The *set apart few* need to wrestle with the question: What would a person equipped for ministry "look like"? I would like to suggest four marks of believers who are being equipped for ministry:

#### 1. A strong sense of identity

Gabriel Fackre has said, "It is the responsibility of the laity to spearhead the work of the church in the world; it is also the task of the pastor to equip the laity for its worldly mission. The pastor does this by nurturing the laity in the identity of the Christian faith" (Fackre, 1959:35). In order for Christian believers to be involved in ministry in the world, they must have a clear and growing sense of identity, both corporate and individual.

The initial identity of the people of God was forged by the action of the Lord in their midst and on their behalf, combined with the proclamation of his messengers (Exod. 19:4-6). The emergence of a similar self-consciousness by succeeding generations was dependent on cultic expression and oral proclamation (Deut. 6:20-24).

Christian identity was also linked to the proclamation surrounding a key historical event (Acts 2:22-36). Those who belonged to the faith communities of Israel and the early church came to see themselves and to understand their relationships with God, each other, and the larger world on the basis of the story that once brought their movements into being.

Pastors need to be reminded that they are facilitators of identity formation and reformation in their congregations. Creative preaching and teaching rehearses the chief reference points of the faith and thus confirms and deepens (or initiates) identity formation. That this is a critical need in the church is asserted by C. S. Calian: "Without identity, the church will be sucked into the uncertainty and relativism of our society. Without identity the church will lose its mission and vision for tomorrow" (Calian 1977:128).

#### 2. A clear sense of vocation

Pastors need to teach and preach that all believers are called not only to be "in Christ" or in the church but also in the world. To serve in the tradition of Jesus, Jeremiah, and Moses means to be involved in a ministry to others which embraces evangelism and service and includes witness to individuals and structures. Hans-Rudi Weber reportedly said, "The function of the church to be the salt of the earth can only be fulfilled by the laity." Where God's people live and work and play, they are to be witnesses to him who is their Lord and Savior; there they will seek to serve their fellow human beings with love and compassion.

#### 3. A growing awareness of issues

Under the pastor's leadership congregations will be led to an awareness of the issues pressing for attention. Being sent involved Moses, Jeremiah, and Jesus in challenging beliefs, practices, and values which they encountered as part of the status quo, both in the community of faith and in their culture.

The issues receiving attention in congregations may have been previously identified and accepted by the laity, or they may be new to them. The congregation's program

will compel all believers to examine issues for the first time, or it will provide them with fresh insights and relevant analysis of issues facing individuals, the church as a whole, or the larger society.

#### 4. The capacity to cope

Whether or not Christians can serve others in the way they are called to will depend on whether they are adequately coping in their own lives. The support needed for coping is a function of the body to which they belong. Pastors and other leaders will lead their congregations in identifying needs and designing appropriate individual and corporate responses to the difficulties persons encounter.

To work at the task of equipping believers for their ministry, pastors need to work at overcoming the increasing biblical illiteracy in the church by theologically informed, creatively conceived, and life-related proclamation of the Word!

Our churches also need to reassess their expectations of members. If the church's primary mission is to serve others, we need to ask why we expect Christians to devote so much time to church-centered work (in the gathered sense) rather than freeing them to be about their real ministry in the world. Some Christians spend so much time with fellow Christians that they have neither time nor energy to become involved with their neighbors.

#### Response to the vision

This proposal of vision for mission needs to be tested. I believe it points in a potentially fruitful direction. It is biblically based. It allows for developing specific programs and strategies in response to perceived needs and available resources of the congregation. The proposal is congruent with our Anabaptist conviction of the centrality of laity in the ministry of the church. It calls for a reexamination of the role of the *set apart few* leaders in the congregation and insists that what is done when the church gathers must serve a larger purpose. This vision for mission will serve well if congregations and their leaders are encouraged to reexamine what they are doing and respond creatively and faithfully to the needs of persons and groups in their communities. Jesus' word to us is still, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." May we be obedient and responsive as Moses, Jeremiah, and Jesus have been before us!

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# How Can Missionaries Help Churches Grow?

SHELDON SAWATZKY

(NOTE: This article was originally presented as a lecture at the annual conference of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship in Taiwan, November 1986.)

How can missionaries help churches grow? This is a question asked by many missionaries and is part of the larger question of their identity and role as cross-cultural workers. Can a foreigner struggling to become fluent in the local language, still learning the rudiments and some of the fine points of the culture and its worldview, really make a helpful contribution to the work and mission of the local church to its society? These questions are asked not only by first-termers, but by missionaries throughout their cross-cultural mission career.

The issue of the missionary role in the mission and growth of the church is even more pertinent as we enter a new era of world missions. This new era is characterized by the growth of the church in the two-thirds world, and the increasing consciousness of these churches for their responsibility in world mission. Sixty percent of the world Christian population is in the two-thirds world. Already there are more than 15,000 cross-cultural missionaries sent out by churches of the two-thirds world. Mission is no longer a one-way street from the West. It is *world* mission, international mission.

Lesslie Newbigin asks, "Can the West be converted?" The gospel has become foolishness to the Greeks (Western man), and the Western world will be one of the largest and toughest mission fields of the next century (Newbigin, 1987:2-7). What is our role as Western missionaries in a church that may soon be sending missionaries of its own back to our homelands?

Jacob Loewen, missionary anthropologist, suggests that cross-cultural mission is like a bus with four badly worn tires and no spare wheel. It needs persons who can endlessly patch the tubes and mend the almost threadbare tires. He concludes that the sending church "prepares its candidates for leadership roles that often are not in the indigenous church's interest." He further suggests that the missionary on the field needs "sensitivity to discover the specific 'mender-of-tires' role in which the indigenous church needs them" (Loewen, 1986:253-260).

As the basis for determining the missionary's role in the growth of the church, I share with you my perspective on mission and church growth, lifting out from Luke 10:8-9 some principles on how missionaries can help churches grow.

## Two principles of mission and church growth

### *The goal of mission*

Christian mission is based in the trinitarian God. Since the

revelation of God in Jesus Christ is the center of Christianity, Christian mission participates in the activity and purpose of God in history by the power of the Holy Spirit. The final goal of God's mission is the complete manifestation of the messianic kingdom—a kingdom of love, justice, peace, and new life. The church displays this newly created community: by its life it anticipates the messianic kingdom, and by its mission it proclaims this kingdom in announcing to the world the salvation of God in Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 3:9-10, Paul declares that God finally fulfilled his wonderful plan in Christ, and the church has received the commission to make known to all mankind God's plan of salvation. The meaning of this salvation is that God's "kingdom come, his will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

If the ultimate goal of God's mission is the complete manifestation of his kingdom, what is the role of church growth within this goal? Church growth is a sign and penultimate goal of God's mission. If the community of Jesus is a normal body, it should grow and develop. This growth is a gift of God's grace, and a witness to the power of the Holy Spirit. This growth is not only numerical growth; it involves the total growth of the church in all aspects—in spirituality, in understanding of biblical teaching, in social concern, in the internal life of the church, in the training of members for the work of ministry, in stewardship. This is a multidimensional growth, and we dare not overemphasize one aspect if we are to maintain a balanced growth.

Church growth itself is not an instrument or method of mission. The church is the instrument of mission, and the church's growth is witness to the actuality of mission. For this reason, the effectiveness of the church's mission is not primarily evaluated by economic and numerical standards. Because the church is a community of faith, the development of the kingdom of God becomes the standard by which we evaluate the church's effectiveness in mission.

The result of overemphasis on church growth, particularly as the tool and method of mission, is the tendency to forget about the church's real nature. Emphasis on growth often fails to consider the subject of growth—the church, its nature, function, needs, and historical context. The result is an emphasis on right methods and strategies to the exclusion of growth in the church's self-understanding. On the other hand, if the church implements its missionary calling according to kingdom standards, its witness will be incarnational and related to the total context.

### *Mission inward and outward*

If the church is to be effective in fulfilling its missionary mandate, my second conviction is that the church's movement in mission will be both inward-directed and outward-directed. This concept is based on the biblical record of God's action in history through his elected people—Israel and the church. In the Old Testament we see the missionary God proclaiming a universal message of blessing and salvation through creation and the elec-

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tion of Israel as a light to the nations. The nations were to be attracted to God through his separated and holy people, and peoples of the earth would flow to Mt. Zion in a centripetal movement. In the New Testament, the new Israel is commissioned to move outward from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth with the message of salvation for all mankind. This is a centrifugal movement, a movement of the church directed toward the world.

In mission today, the church needs both the inward and the outward movements of mission—witness by the holy life and evangelistic lifestyle of the congregation, and active programs of outreach in society locally and cross-culturally.

The churches in Taiwan have tried a plethora of evangelistic methods. We spend money, time, and personnel pursuing first this new method, then that one. What is the result? The church has experienced little growth. Those who believe in Christ and enter the fellowship of the church are few. Much of numerical church growth reported in Taiwan is simply transfer growth in the urban centers.

From the failure of our evangelistic methods to produce results we can learn at least one important truth—if evangelism does not issue from the spiritual life of the church and an understanding of its true nature, it will likely fail or have only short-term effect. The question is not one of methods, programs, planning, and skill. The problem is much deeper, more fundamental. It relates to our understanding of the nature of the church and the concept of salvation. The truth is that if we are not united to the body of Christ, we cannot be united to Christ, the Head of the church. It is erroneous to think that people can be Christian without being born visibly into the family of God. It is also faulty to assume that we can do evangelistic work while at the same time neglecting the dynamic, living relationship between the Head and the body. The church is a body in fellowship with Christ and believers with one another—both a horizontal and vertical intimate relationship.

The church in its life must be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation—only then can it proclaim God's marvelous works. It must *be* good news before it can *proclaim* good news. The church itself becomes mission; it becomes the living proclamation of God in the midst of the world. Without this mission, the church is an exaggerated human organization.

If the church is to effectively spread the gospel, we first must pay attention to the quality and character of the inner life of the congregation. This has direct bearing on how missionaries can help the church to grow. If we can help the church make Christ's commission central, that mission will determine the church's purpose, methods, priorities, form, structure, and lifestyle. The church's motivation for evangelism springs from the inner lifestyle of the congregation as the Spirit's gifts of love, joy, repentance, and reconciliation are displayed. This lifestyle in itself is one of the most powerful and effective witnesses.

But the lifestyle of the church alone is insufficient for effective witness. The church must reach out actively into the community. This outward movement in mission involves strategy, planning, and designing of programs that can effectively reach the surrounding community of the local church. This can involve missionaries. How? Using the outline of Luke 10:8-9, let me suggest specific ways that missionaries can help the church to grow.

## Principles for Missionaries

### Incarnation

"When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you." In general terms this is the principle of incarnation or identification with people. When we are welcomed to work in a church, we must become totally involved in the life of that congregation. It means:

**We must literally eat what is set before us.** This illustrates the importance of our cultural adjustment. Eating is the basic human function endowed with deep cultural significance, especially in Taiwanese society. If we reject or decline to eat what is offered to us in hospitality, we cause offense and lose further right for identification with people. We must not only eat the food, but learn to enjoy and even crave it. One missionary hymn says, "Where he leads me I will follow; what he feeds me I will swallow."

From the very first Sunday you are in Taiwan, **attend a local church.** Even though you cannot speak or understand a word, your presence in a local congregation shows your intent to identify with and become one of the group. As you build language skills you will become increasingly involved in the church program and ministry—English Bible classes, music, youth work, Sunday school, visiting, preaching, counseling, evangelism. After formal language study, a period of internship in a local church under the supervision of an experienced pastor is invaluable.

I fail to comprehend how missionaries who are studying language and hope to work with the local church choose to attend English services on a regular basis, thus building their primary relationships with expatriates instead of the people they are sent to reach.

If feasible, **try the bonding process** by living with a Chinese family for the first six months. If you are able to have this kind of exposure and experience, you will never regret it.

**Live in the neighborhood of the church,** and make daily contact with neighborhood people—shopkeepers, neighbors. Open your home to neighbors. Build friendships. Some of these friendships will lead to openness to the gospel. Remember that it takes time to build relationships and to gain trust. Trust has to be earned in the neighborhood and in the church where you work.

If you are involved in new church planting, **do it together with nationals as a team.** Share your gifts. Make suggestions, but never with the attitude that I know how and you do not.

Above all, **your attitude will determine success or failure** in relating to the local church and community. Your attitude speaks volumes and is immediately sensed by others. A national summed up the attitude of one missionary by saying, "She loves Chinese things; she doesn't love Chinese people." If our ministry is to be truly incarnational, our attitude will be one of servanthood, humility, learning, caring, compassion, and empathy with the felt needs of people. Wakatama, from an African perspective, found these missionary attitudes to be very offensive:

*... a paternalistic attitude that views mature nationals as being children who need to be constantly supervised; a lack of faith in the ability of nationals to take responsibility, especially where money is involved; and looking on national leaders as assisting missionaries and not as serving God in their own right. (Wakatama, 1976:93)*

We need to remind ourselves that mission is God's, not ours. We are participants, co-workers together with him.

### *Demonstration of the good news*

"Heal the sick who are there." The good news and the power of the gospel need to be demonstrated through our lives and ministries. Jesus and the apostles demonstrated the good news of the kingdom of God by healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, and casting out demons.

In the Chinese worldview, there is a vast realm of reality that we as Westerners have excluded from our own worldview. Referring to this as "the flaw of the excluded middle," Paul Hiebert (1982:35-47) clarifies how we tend to deny the existence of the world of spirits, ancestors, ghosts, demons, gods, souls of animals, magic, astrology, dreams, and visions. We are likely to dismiss unexplainable healings, visions, or disasters as "accident," "luck," or merely "coincidence." Our Chinese neighbors ask how they can be successful, prevent accidents, have a fruitful marriage and a prosperous business. They ask why there is sudden illness, failure in business, unexpected death. Answers are sought in the middle level we have excluded—the spirits, local gods, and the ancestors. Many of us as Western missionaries have no answers for these questions within our worldview. What is the Christian theology of ancestors, of local spirits and demon-possession, and of the evil powers of darkness in this world? If the Christian's God cannot provide the answer to family and business problems, the fortune-tellers and shamans can.

In this realm of reality, we must demonstrate the power of God in encounter with the forces of evil. To begin with, we will recognize the existence of this realm of the supernatural, and then develop a theology and a means of dealing with it in the power of Christ. We do not want to turn Christianity into another new formula of magic or a mere substitute for gaining peace, prosperity, and the control of our own destinies; rather, we will emphasize worship of the true and living Creator God by placing ourselves in his will, power, and mercy.

Ask Christians in the church to testify how they became believers. Many came to Christ in crisis experiences, through divine healing, through the casting out of demons, through the demonstration of God's power over the spirits. Let us be open to the felt needs of people and not discount their experiences, whether with demonic forces in their past life or the power of God in their Christian life through healing, dreams, and divine guidance.

Perhaps in the first term, missionaries will not be called on to cast out demons, to pray for healing of the sick, or to remove the god shelves. But sooner or later we will meet these issues head on and must demonstrate the power of the gospel.

The demonstration of the gospel's power must also be done by witness through our life as a family, by how we and our children behave on the neighborhood street. The power of the gospel will be shown by the life of the local church as it extends mutual care and love to its members, as the members live confidently, joyously, and victoriously in the face of difficulties and tragedy. This kind of witness is powerful, and missionaries can be intimately involved in it. As non-Christian family members see the love and power of God demonstrated, they will be attracted to such a community of believers. The church will grow.

### *Proclamation*

"... And tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'" It may not be legitimate to place these three commands of Luke 10:8-9 in order of priority, but let us assume that this is a progressive order. When we have identified with the local church and community and gained their trust, and when we have demonstrated the power of the gospel

in our lives, then we can proclaim with our mouths the message of the kingdom. This can be done in a number of ways: answering the reason for our faith and our presence in Taiwan, verbal witness, preaching, teaching, and by other means.

My personal conviction is that the most effective means of witness and proclamation is through person-to-person relationships and communication. This is not to discount mass media and other forms of Christian communication if we recognize their limitations and incompleteness.

Person-to-person communication of the gospel will be greatly enhanced if we can help the church to build networks of relationships. We need to do networking on different levels: 1) **family networks**—in which Christian families maintain relationships with their non-Christian family members and seek to share the gospel in deed and word—these are natural contacts; 2) **professional networks**—fellow workers, classmates; 3) **friendship networks**—casual relationships with storekeepers, hairdressers, neighbors, market people; and 4) **organizational networks**—with Christian organizations, government agencies, people with resources or in positions of influence who can assist us in accomplishing our task. If we have established relationships in all these networks, they can assist us in making contacts for the sake of the gospel. Often it is not what you know, but who you know that counts.

In our proclamation of the good news, we as missionaries may have gifts in areas that can assist the church in mission strategy. Perhaps one area in which we can contribute is that of planning. As Westerners we tend to be more linear-oriented in our view of reality and of the future. We are trained to think in terms of step-by-step logical planning for future events. We can help the Taiwanese church in planning evangelistic strategy and following through in implementation. The Taiwanese proverb "tiger's head, mouse's tail" describes not only our Taiwanese friends, but also our initial enthusiastic planning without carrying it through to completion.

### **The sign of kingdom growth**

How can missionaries help the church grow? I have attempted to say that we need the perspective of the kingdom of God in which church growth is a sign of kingdom growth. The inner lifestyle of the congregation is as important for witness and growth as its outreach into the world. We as missionaries can help the church to grow through its inward and outward movements in evangelism by developing an incarnational lifestyle in the church and community, by demonstrating the power of God's rule in our lives and in the lives of believers who once lived under the power of sin and evil, and by proclaiming in personal encounter with our networks of relationships the message of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

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# From Ancient Jerusalem to Modern Tokyo:

## Contextualization in Japanese Culture and Society

ROBERT LEE

### Issue and Definition

In the past decade the term *contextualization* has become the leading conceptual tool in both evangelical and ecumenical missiological journals.<sup>1</sup> Yet there have been few systematic attempts to express the gospel contextualized in a particular culture.<sup>2</sup>

Much of the theoretical discussion, including many illustrations drawn from field experiences, continues to be of an *ad hoc* character, often set in the context of an underdeveloped civilization.<sup>3</sup> One major exception may be the liberation theology of Latin America, although this theology did not arise directly from the recent challenge of contextualization and, in fact, may have preceded it.<sup>4</sup> In Korea the recent development of *minjung*, or people's theology, may prove in the future to be important to us in Japan.<sup>5</sup> Both of these theologies have their roots in the socio-political context of an oppressed people and are guided more by a particular theological disposition and/or socio-political judgment than by their religio-cultural contexts. In any event, from the context of the nearly single-class, homogeneous society of Japan, liberation theology of either the Latin-American or Korean variety does not seem immediately relevant.

In Japan the response of my Japanese colleagues to the need for contextualization is that they have been doing it for years. Of course, this is true. All pastors, as well as missionaries, adapt their message in order to communicate to a specific audience. All must perform the hermeneutical task every time they preach. Nevertheless, much of what they say remains clearly within the framework of a familiar Western theology, which is precisely what is being challenged by the call for contextualization.

True, a few Japanese scholar-theologians, writing from the platform of a secular university, have produced provocative theological statements that must be taken seriously, but these are written from the perspective of the older theory of the indigenization of the gospel.<sup>6</sup> At Doshisha University Takenaka Masao has creatively raised the contextualization issue in terms of a Japanese aesthetic; however, the aesthetic point of departure is intrinsically difficult for systematic development.<sup>7</sup>

Without further review of the many debates in recent literature and for the purpose of this paper, let me define contextualization as a multi-layered process for the missionary in Japan.

The first contextualization task is a familiar one: discovering the meaning of the biblical text, that is, "what it meant."<sup>8</sup> Through the powerful tools of biblical studies we can leave our contemporary world and enter vicariously into the world of first-century Christians and, within limits,

even the earlier biblical period. Through these studies we can increasingly understand "what it meant." But "what it meant" is not sufficient because the Bible becomes gospel only when we can communicate "what it means" to our listeners. This task of bridging the first and twentieth centuries is the familiar hermeneutical task and the first step in a multi-layered process of contextualization.

For missionaries there is a second level of contextualization: that of bracketing their own culture in order to learn to live and think in terms of a new culture. Again, through the powerful tools of contemporary Japanese studies, the nonnative cultural speaker can acquire an understanding of Japanese culture and society.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, there is a third level of contextualization: the journey from ancient Jerusalem to modern Tokyo, a journey from ancient to modern times and from Western to Asian civilizations. This third level, the integration of the first two levels, is the most difficult to achieve or even to explicate. It is this level that my paper focuses on.

Just how does one move from ancient Jerusalem to modern Tokyo? The road traveled by the typical missionary in Japan may have begun historically in the ancient Near East before leading to Jerusalem, then to Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, Germany, New England, and California before reaching Japan, where this entire heritage was transplanted in its new environment. The path taken by Japanese pastors may not be too different since they, too, discover Christian faith somewhere along the Western route, from which they, too, transplant and adapt to their native environment a largely Western religious tradition. The issue here is not whether this has been a proper route, since Christianity has indeed been established in Japan in this way. Rather, the problem is that this route has created a gospel message that "smells like butter," that is fundamentally discontinuous with Japanese cultural history. Further, the issue is not whether there is a shortcut or a direct flight from Jerusalem to Tokyo—at this late date there may be no way to bypass the Western religious tradition already in Japan. Rather, the issue is whether we can continue to ignore the cultural history of civilizations that began in ancient India and China and later were transplanted into Japan during the sixth to ninth centuries A.D. to form a new Asian civilization.

In addition to the cross-cultural issue there is the temporal one, namely, whether the modern age in Japan is an extension of Western modernity. Does modernity, which originated in the West, represent the convergence of human history into a single history? The answer may be no, since a growing number of comparative, macrosocietal sociologists and historians agree that modernity is not converging, that those societies with a great tradition established before the impact of Western modernization will continue to modernize in interaction with their own traditions to create distinctive forms of modernity.<sup>10</sup> For us in Japan it is obvious that modern Japan is not easily reducible to modern America.

If modernity or human history is not converging, then

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contextualization must take into account the diversity of human history. In Japan contextualization may require traversing simultaneously two independent but parallel cultural histories, one beginning in ancient Israel and the other in ancient India and China, and both arriving in different temporal periods in Japan.

### Contextualization in Japan

To the Japanese, as indicated earlier, contextualization is not a new issue. Long before it became fashionable to use such terminology, Uchimura Kanzo (1861-1930), one of the earliest Japanese Christians in the modern period, called for a Japanese Christianity:

*When a Japanese truly and independently believes in Christ, he is a Japanese Christian, and his Christianity is Japanese Christianity. . . . A Japanese by becoming a Christian does not cease to be a Japanese. On the contrary, he becomes more Japanese by becoming a Christian. A Japanese who becomes an American or an Englishman or an amorphous universal man, is neither a true Japanese nor a true Christian (1932:XV, 578f.).*

*My friends are Honen rather than Wesley, Shinran rather than Moody. Those of the same religion do not necessarily have the same direction of faith. The heart with which I turn to Jesus is like the heart with which Honen and Shinran relied on Amida. It is not the heart with which English and Americans believe in Christ (1961:XVI, 130)*

*Does Christianity lose by bringing the spirit of samurai into it? Was not Latin Christianity a happy fusion of the Christian faith and the old Roman spirit? Was not Luther's German Christianity a valuable and distinct contribution to Christianity? So then, pray be careful that you call your American and English Christianity a universal religion, and condemn my Japanese Christianity as national and sectional. . . . I have seen no more sorrowful figures than Japanese who imitate their American or European missionary teachers by being converted to the faith of the latter (1932:XV, 579).*

As these several quotations illustrate, Uchimura clearly announced the need for contextualization of the gospel in Japanese culture and history, a task that he left unfinished, however. For the purposes of this paper, an analysis of his insights, using theory from cultural anthropology and sociology, may illumine for missionaries, Japanese Christians, and missiologists alike the path from Jerusalem to Tokyo.

### Religion as a cultural system

For Uchimura the concept of humanity was an abstraction because in human history there could be only Japanese, American, German, and other social groups of human beings, each group defined by its particular cultural history. Therefore, to be a Japanese human being was to him inseparable from one's Japanese cultural identity. Becoming a Christian did not and could not destroy one's cultural identity; in fact, only in and perhaps through one's cultural heritage could one become a Christian, specifically a Japanese, American, English, or German Christian. Further, he argued that his Japanese heritage did not corrupt his Christian faith; rather, his commitment to Christ enabled him to actualize in his own life the high moral values of his samurai heritage and at the same time to realize the deep faith of his religious predecessors, Honen (1133-1212) and Shinran (1173-1262).<sup>11</sup>

Uchimura's understanding that human beings are cul-

turally defined—their identity, their meaning of life—and culturally motivated to realize these meanings in their lives, resonates with contemporary theory. According to the social anthropologist Clifford Geertz, in his now famous essay, "Religion as a Cultural System," culture is defined as

*an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men can communicate, perpetuate their knowledge about and attitude toward life (Geertz 1966:3).<sup>12</sup>*

Continuing, Geertz defines religion as a cultural system: *a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful and long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of facticity that the moods seem uniquely real (1966:4).<sup>13</sup>*

Following both Uchimura and Geertz, we can say that each culture formulates its own religious understanding or religious symbol system, which functions to integrate both meaning and motivation. According to Geertz, religious symbol systems accomplish this dual feat by becoming the "model of" and the "model for" reality.<sup>14</sup> As the "model of" reality, religious symbols, which are deeply embedded in a particular culture, provide the members of society its most general order of meaning, for example, ideas of God, humankind, and the world in Western Christian thought. At the same time, these symbols, as the "model for" reality, elicit the appropriate religious responses, what Geertz calls "moods and motivations," to what has become society's normative understanding of God, humankind, and the world. However, in the process of these religious symbols changing from the "model of" to the "model for" reality, radical transformations may occur.

Let me illustrate simply from Christian thought how religious symbol systems function. Our understanding of God as our heavenly father is in the beginning both conditioned by our experiences with our earthly fathers and shaped by our cultural teachings about fathers. Thus our first understanding of God as father, which is deeply embedded in a particular cultural heritage, becomes our "model of" reality or, in this case, of God. But religious symbols can also transcend the limitations of a particular society. For example, theologians have transformed our understanding of God as father by attributing to God such notions as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, so that God, the Father (now designated with a capital "F"), becomes the "model for" reality, that is, the normative pattern of meaning for our society. Father (with a capital "F") now may even become the "model for" judging our earthly fathers if they fail to measure up to the loving heavenly Father.

To summarize our theoretical discussion, we can describe religion as a cultural or symbol system that is both immanent in a particular culture and transcendent to a particular society. As cultural symbols that are immanent, they provide religious meaning that is immediately relevant to people's daily lives. As religious symbols that transcend, they become the normative patterns of meaning, eliciting the appropriate human responses. Contextualization of the gospel in Japanese culture and society thus requires that we utilize religious or cultural symbols that are immanent in Japanese culture as the "model of" reality, and that, at the same time, can be transformed in such a way as to transcend Japanese society in order to become the "model for" that society.

## Uchimura and contextualization

The theoretical description of religious symbol systems, described above, was in many ways understood by Uchimura. From his Confucian-samurai tradition, he found his "model of" in the disinterested loyalty of a faithful samurai to his lord, best depicted in his volume on *Representative Men of Japan* (1972:II). In his Christian faith he shifted this loyalty to his new Lord, Jesus Christ, who now became his "model for" worship and service. Loyalty to a transcendent Lord freed him from the conventional "blind loyalty and bloody patriotism" of his countrymen (1972:II, 7) and enabled him to become one of Japan's fiercest moral and social critics. At the same time, his loyalty to Christ in terms of his samurai culture enabled him to speak directly to the hearts of these same countrymen.<sup>15</sup>

Uchimura also understood the need for what we labeled earlier the third level of contextualization, the necessity for traversing two different historical routes in order to move from the ancient Near East to modern Japan. He argued that, historically, Western civilization marched from the ancient Near East to the West through Europe and America to Japan, while Eastern civilization, which also began in the ancient Near East, had marched through India, China, and Korea, before reaching Japan. Continuing, he claimed that Japan "within the past thirty years swallowed everything that Europe had to give us and digestion [was] going on briskly," and that from the East Japan had "imbibed the best of Korea, China, and India, and the assimilation [was] well nigh complete." Thus he concluded that the mission to which Japan was called was "to reconcile the East and the West; to be the advocate of the East and the harbinger of the West" (1932:XVI, 23f.).

In time Uchimura learned that this approach to history and to the role of Japan in that history was too uncritical. In 1903, when because of conscience he terminated a successful career as a famous journalist, he redirected his strategy from that of building a Japanese civilization that would reconcile the East and West to that of building a new civilization of moral and spiritual men and women. For twenty-five years he wrote, taught, and preached on biblical topics, creating an independent movement that he called both a "Christianity without church" (*mukyo-kaishugi kirisutokyo*) and a "Japanese Christianity."<sup>16</sup>

In these writings Uchimura demonstrated a clear understanding of the issues of contextualization, especially on the first and second levels, as defined earlier. In his many biblical commentaries, he showed that he could skillfully use the critical resources of contemporary biblical studies to determine "what it meant" without losing the message of "what it means" today.<sup>17</sup> In his earlier writings he showed sensitivity to the issues of the second level of contextualization when he wrote about the sufferings of being both a loyal Japanese and a faithful Christian, that is, about the inner contradiction of these two stances, which historians have called the Japanese self-identity crisis.<sup>18</sup> These works continue to be best-sellers today. However, even though he revealed remarkable insights into the issues of the third level of contextualization, especially in his call for a Japanese Christianity, he did not address these issues systematically in either theological or cultural terms in his writings.

We can only conjecture about why Uchimura left this task unfinished. In his later works, mostly biblical commentaries, he chose to remain in the idiom of his New

England (Puritan) theology.<sup>19</sup> The contrast between the religious language of his earlier cultural works and his later biblical commentaries is so great that scholars have despaired comprehending the "two" Uchimuras.<sup>20</sup> My own guess is that because of his education in Japan (in Sapporo) and in the U.S. (at Amherst College) he became one of those rare bicultural persons, equally eloquent in both English and Japanese. He, therefore, moved so easily in both cultures that perhaps he did not feel a need to put into writing his understanding of the gospel for a Japanese Christianity. Instead, he chose to institutionalize his religious movement as the *mukyokai*, the nonchurch movement, which is sustained culturally by its high level of biblical studies, our first level of contextualization.

## Cultural identity crisis

As Uchimura noted, historically the march of Western civilization did confront the ancient Asian civilization in Japan in its modern period. And, as Uchimura noted, the Japanese response was a rapid modernization of all its major institutions in the economic, political, and social sectors. However, at the cultural level and in the primary social relations within the major institutions, the Japanese response has remained traditional. Uchimura's own life and writings clearly illustrate—what sociologists call a cultural identity crisis—this confrontation of modern Western culture and traditional Japanese culture.

This cultural identity crisis has been well analyzed by sociologists (Robert Bellah, 1962, 1965a, 1965b, 1971), anthropologists (Nakane Chie, 1970) and psychologists (Takeo Doi, 1973, 1986) and has been described as the conflict between modern versus traditional, universal versus particular, or personal versus group cultural values. Recently Hamaguchi Eshun (1985) has rightly criticized these analyses of having a Western bias in favor of modern, universal, or personal values, and, as a consequence, of depicting Japanese society as "unique," that is, as being neo-traditional, particularistic, or group-value-oriented. What he proposes, instead, is a typology of two fundamentally different models (unified on the metamethod level) of the structure and meaning of human existence, one rooted in the Asian and the other in the Western cultural traditions, as a method to avoid the bias imposed by models derived from a single historical tradition.<sup>21</sup>

Hamaguchi's proposal is especially useful for theory building at two levels. First, his typology offers a corrective to the biases of earlier analyses of Japanese culture and society, which presupposed the convergence of human history in modernity. If, as argued earlier, human history is not converging in modernity, theoretical models developed from different strands of that history are indeed necessary. Second, for the purposes of this paper, his typology provides two different understandings of human existence, that is, two "models of" reality, each rooted in a different cultural heritage. In other words, Hamaguchi's models can more accurately describe the cultural identity crisis in Japan as the confrontation of two fundamentally different understandings of human existence, which have resisted merging on both the cultural and personal levels in Japan.

## Two models of human existence

According to Hamaguchi,

*It is possible to classify human models into two main categories, according to whether emphasis is placed on the objectification of the self only, or on the objectifica-*



tion of relationships between self (actor) and objects (including other actors). These human models are revealed according to the cultural modes of objectification and show a culturally determined definition of mankind or view of what is human (1985:298).

Thus Hamaguchi develops a typology of actor systems consisting of "individual actors" representing the Western tradition and "relational actors" for East Asian people, including the Japanese. "The criterion for the differentiation . . . is the referent chosen in objectification—namely, whether the self or the relationship between the self and the other is chosen as the predominant referent" (1985:299).

In Hamaguchi's typology, the fundamental form of human existence in the Western tradition consists of unconnected individual selves. In this tradition it is assumed that the individual has an inviolable personal self and that this self possesses the ability to make rational and responsible decisions. Behind these assumptions are Western values such as freedom, equality, and dignity—for example, each person has a soul (Greek) and/or is created in the image of God (biblical).

In this Western model social relationships are seen as necessary compromises, as the means for reciprocal interaction between individuals who are not connected to one another. Since conflict between individuals is seen as not only inevitable but natural (reinforced by the biblical notion of the Fall of man), the autonomy of the individual must be safeguarded from tampering by outside agents. Therefore, social relations are developed mutually to confirm the inviolability of the personal self and to secure the freedom of each individual.<sup>22</sup>

In contrast to this Western model, which reduces the nature of human existence or actorship (the self) to that of isolated individuals, Hamaguchi says this:

*Japanese realize their actorship . . . in their intimate relations with others. As Watsuji Tetsuro stated, "we have relational existence in our everyday life." Kimura Bin expressed the same idea in his statement that "in the experience-structure of us Japanese, man has always been seen in his 'in betweenness,' in relationship with others as ningen."*

*The idiomatic usages of the Japanese language bear strong evidence that the Japanese think of man in his relationship with others. Watsuji pointed out that in Japanese the same word, hito (man), can mean both self and others. Ningen, which originated from a Chinese word meaning "world" or "society," now means people in a society or a group. Such divergences in meaning would be inconceivable to Euro-Americans who conceptually distinguish society from the individuals that are its components (1985:301).*

Hamaguchi further contrasts the Western notion of a core self as defining one's uniqueness or substance to a more fluid Japanese sense of identification with others. Quoting Kimura Bin, he argues:

*" . . . jibun, the word for self in Japanese, originally meant one's share of something beyond oneself. It is neither substance nor an attribute having a constant oneness." In short jibun as the Japanese consciousness of the self is not an abstract quality which lies within the actor himself, "but rather a reality which is discovered from time to time outside of himself, or, more specifically, between oneself and another."*

*If jibun is one's own share, someone else's share may be called the tabun (other's share). Jibun and tabun do not maintain separate domains from which they confront*

*each other; rather, they occupy a space that commonly belongs to both (or at least partially overlaps) so that the distribution of their respective shares changes according to the changes in the overall situation (1985:302).*

To summarize, Hamaguchi depicts the Western understanding of human nature as a reified conception of the self. In other words, the group of human existence is found within the individual self. He argues that the Japanese find meaning primarily in a network of relationships, which is perceived as the fundamental reality, in short, a collective actor instead of an individual actor. Selfness, for the Japanese, is not a notion of a reified self, but a fluid concept which changes through time and situations. Individuals are not separate actors but are covariant relationships in mutual accord with others. Concepts such as the "I" and "you" are not definite absolutes but are relative according to changing social relationships. Relationships are not intentionally created but preexist in a social nexus in which the individual discovers himself. Individual consciousness does arise but only as the individual becomes aware of his or her role in a particular social context.

Although typologies are intrinsically reductionistic, they highlight differences. In this case Hamaguchi's two models of human existence represent two seemingly irreducible cultural options available in Japan today. On the one hand, the traditional Japanese model remains functional today in shaping the primary social relationships, often in the context of otherwise modern social structures. On the other hand, since the Meiji Restoration, the secularized Western model, represented in such ideals as *dokuritsujison* (independence and self-respect), *jiyu* (freedom), *byodo* (equality), and *ningen no songen* (the dignity of man), has been at the center of many Japanese intellectual writings and popular discussions. The latter discussions reflect the desire for the individuation of a personal self in a society where the cultural values of the collectivity overwhelm the possibility for developing personal independence. In short, the problem of the self remains an unresolved paradox in Japan today because the new values both are alien in their Western dress and find little support in the Japanese cultural tradition.<sup>23</sup>

Fortunately, the resolution of this problem of the self in modern Japan is not the immediate task of contextualizing. Rather, Hamaguchi's description of the paradox by his two different cultural models of human nature serves as raw material, that is, as two "models of" reality, for developing "models for" reality in Japan.<sup>24</sup>

### Contextualization in modernity

For further analysis of this modern problem of the self, we need to return once more to Uchimura, who faced one form of this problem head-on. In his loyalty to his cultural identity as Japanese and his loyalty to his new Lord, Jesus Christ, he attempted to contextualize his dual identity by turning to the faith of the religious giants in his own cultural heritage. In an earlier quote he indicated that the faith that he had in Jesus Christ was not like that of an American and English believer in Christ, but was more akin to that of Honen and Shinran in Amida Buddha. This preference for Honen and Shinran needs to be juxtaposed with his earlier interest in Nichiren in his book *Representative Men of Japan*.

Uchimura turned to Honen and Shinran after his disillusionment with his own country, which was following what he considered to be the worst features of the West. He, therefore, shifted from the activist faith of Nichiren

to the radically transcendent position of Honen and Shinran. Both Honen and Shinran had radically disvalued this world in terms of a higher reality, Amida Buddha. Both had found faith in Amida that led to their rejection of institutionalized religion, as well as to the demands of society. Shinran had gone so far as to refuse to organize his followers since all were fellow travelers (sinners) relying on the power of Amida.<sup>25</sup> This same radically transcendent faith enabled Uchimura to maintain his powerful independence of all human demands, whether those of the missionaries and their institutions or of his own countrymen.

In Shinran's case, in spite of his refusal to organize, his followers did form later an organized movement in which the transcendent faith in Amida of his followers became redirected to a lineal descendant and leader of a revolutionary movement, the *ikko ikki*, in medieval Japan.<sup>26</sup>

Uchimura, too, refused, in his radical faith, to institutionalize his religious movement into the church, which he judged to be a flawed Western institution. However, he even went a step further than Shinran did. In his will he disbanded his followers upon his death. This practice has become a built-in mechanism to insure the growth of the *mukyokai* today by charismatic leadership and not by inherited or institutionalized leadership.<sup>27</sup>

Uchimura's legacy for many of us and for many Japanese represents an unfinished agenda. To deal with his insights and his omissions, we will need, perhaps, to push further back into Japanese history than the brilliant Kamakura period, which illuminated the Japanese cultural problems of a transcendent faith, soteriology, and an autonomous self. If we follow John Hall's view that contemporary society continues to reflect the familial structures of the early formative period of Japanese history,<sup>28</sup> we will need to compare the formation of community and identity in both ancient Japan and ancient Israel. Such a study might begin with the formation of community in Shotoku Taishi and his 17-article constitution and in the Exodus experience of Moses and the decalogue.<sup>29</sup> In this way, two parallel religious histories, beginning in the ancient Near East and in Asia can be brought together to discover the path from ancient Jerusalem to modern Tokyo. This task, however, remains for a future paper.

## Implications

Instead, we can now specify more clearly the requirements for the task of contextualization, in particular at the third level, in Japan. Contextualization will require an understanding of the "models of" reality and their transformation into "models for" reality in the Japanese or East Asian cultural tradition. It will need to incorporate the aspirations of modern Japanese raised by Western culture but not supported in traditional culture. These become raw material or "models of" reality that will require critical and comparative study with the biblical tradition to discover "models for" reality appropriate to the Japanese context.

The implications of this understanding of contextualization are probably obvious. For the missionary, the third step in the contextualization process should be additional training beyond learning Japanese language and culture. For theological education in Japan, Asian religious and cultural history must become constitutive for theological studies. For contemporary missiology, methodology needs to find actualization in specific cultural contexts.

## Notes

1. "Contextualization" as a new missiological concept appeared first in a 1971 working policy document of the Theological Education Fund, "Ministry in Context: The Third Mandate Programme of the TEF, 1970-1977" (1972). The Fund's director, Shoki Coe, a Taiwanese theologian, explained the need to move beyond the older concept of "indigenization" to "contextualization" in a journal article, "In Search of Renewal in Theological Education" (1973), which was reprinted in part as "Contextualization as the Way Toward Reform" (1980). For a recent evaluation of this important change in missiological theory, see Wilbert Shenk, "Mission in Transition: 1972-1987" (1987:428ff.).

2. Kosuke Koyama, a former Japanese missionary in Southeast Asia, in his book *Waterbuffalo Theology* (1974), represents one of the earliest writers to contextualize theology in Asian cultures, but his works are thematic rather than systematic.

3. This is the tendency of missiologists who have anthropological training. For example, see the recent excellent introductory textbook, *Anthropological Insight for Missionaries* by Paul G. Hiebert of Fuller Theological Seminary (1985).

4. For a background understanding of liberation theology from an evangelical perspective, see Samuel Escobar, "Beyond Liberation Theology: Evangelical Missiology in Latin America" (1982).

5. The basic work in English is *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (1983). Cf. also Cyrus H. S. Moon, *A Korean Minjung Theology—An Old Testament Perspective* (1985).

6. For an evaluation of some recent Japanese theologies, see Matsunaga Kikuo's discussion of the works of Tagawa Kenzo, Arai Sasagu, and Yagi Seiichi in "A New Quest for Christology? A Current Issue for Theology in Japan" (1985).

7. See his essay "A Christian Reflection on Beauty in the Japanese Cultural Context" (1986:143-149).

8. The distinction between "what it meant" (the descriptive task) and "what it means" (the hermeneutical task) is taken from Krister Stendahl's celebrated dictionary essay, "Biblical Theology, Contemporary" (1962). Methodologically, for the purpose of this paper, this differentiation of a biblical theology of the first century ("what it meant") from that of a later period ("what it means") enables us to interpret the biblical message in an Asian rather than a Western cultural context, as will be argued below. Stendahl, himself, graphically illustrates the importance of this distinction in "Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West" (1963), where he shows how Luther (and Western culture) in his classic study of the book of Romans transformed "what it meant" to "what it means" to meet the needs of 16th-century Europeans. On the latter point see also Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther* (1958). For a recent evangelical view of the complex issues in interpreting Scripture in a cross-cultural context, see Larry W. Caldwell, "Third Horizon Ethnohermeneutics: Re-evaluating New Testament Hermeneutical Models for Inter-cultural Bible Interpreters Today" (1987).

9. For a critical review of both Japanese and Western Japanese studies, see Hamaguchi Eshun (Eshun), "A Contextual Model of the Japanese: Toward Methodological Innovation in Japanese Studies" (1985:289-972). His critique of the works of Ruth Benedict (1946), Nakane Chie (1970), Doi Takeo, (1971) and Edwin O. Reischauer (1977) are important.

10. The numerous works of S. N. Eisenstadt of Hebrew University in Jerusalem are crucial. See especially *Tradition, Change, and Modernity* (1973) and *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Civilizations* (1986).

11. Founders of Jodoshu (Pure Land) and Jodoshinshu (True Pure Land) Buddhist sects in the Kamakura period (1185-1333).

12. The concept of culture used here follows that developed by Talcott Parsons in his theory of human action (1951; 1966:5-29). Cultural patterns are constitutive to human existence (as species) and transcend the boundaries of individuals because their primary structural reference is not the individual but rather "that intersubjective world of common understandings into which all human individuals are born and in which they pursue their separate careers, and which they leave persisting behind them after they die" (Geertz, 1966:6). The implications of this position on the understanding of human existence are beyond the scope of this paper, but see Geertz, *The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man* (1965).

13. Geertz's definition describes how religious symbols integrate motivation and meaning, viz: "that sacred symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos—the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood—and their world view—the picture they have of the ways things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order. . . ." In short, "Religious symbols formulate a basic congruence between a particular style and a specific (if, most often, implicit) metaphysics, and in so doing sustain each with the borrowed authority of the other" (1966:3f.).

14. Cultural symbols, according to Geertz (1966:7), function as "models" in two senses: as "models of" reality symbols can simulate existing non-symbolic reality (such as a person, an object in nature, or a social system) in a symbolic form (such as a concept of personhood, a theory of gravity, or a system of kinship) to render that reality comprehensible; and, as a "model for" reality, non-symbolic reality can in turn be shaped according to the relationships expressed in the symbol system. The analytical distinction here is important for establishing religion as an independent variable that is immediately related to the social, psychological, and natural orders and at the same time transcendent to these systems.

15. In *Kirisuto shinto no nagusame* [Consolations of a Christian] (1932:I:1-77) and *Kyuanroku* [Search After Peace] (1932:I, 79-256), Uchimura deals with the problems of loyalty to Christ—the former with the sufferings and consolations of that loyalty, and the latter with the agonies of his search for a disinterested loyalty.

16. For a more complete discussion of Uchimura and his work, see my article "Service to Christ and Country: Uchimura's Search for Meaning" (1981a:71-99). This essay is reprinted in the spring 1988 issue of *The Japan Christian Quarterly* (54:92-110).

17. *Uchimura Kanzo seisho chukai zenshu* [The complete biblical commentaries of Uchimura Kanzo] are collected in 17 volumes (1961-1963).

18. See note 15 above.

19. See Oyama Tsunao and Ray A. Moore, "Uchimura at Amherst" (1981:21-33). For a Japanese Christian criticism, see Tosh Arai, "Mukyokai—Churchless Christians in Japan" (1986:172f.).

20. Historians have labeled Uchimura an "enigma" (Howes, 1965) and a "failure" (Arima, 1969) because of the dramatic change in his lifestyle and writings after 1903.

21. For a fuller development, see his *Kanjin shugi no shakai nihon* (1982).

22. I have revised Hamaguchi's Western model to eliminate some distortions. Cf. Hamaguchi (1985:289-302).

23. Ronald Dore in his article "New Ideas and Old Habits" (1965:44) has perceptively noted that the problem of the individuation of the self remains unresolved. In spite of the fact that "there has been much more talk about the need for greater individuation, for greater independence, etc., than about the need for greater equality, in actual fact there has been more of a movement towards greater egalitarianism in practice in Japanese society than there has toward greater individualism."

24. For a sophisticated analysis of the American religious and cultural heritage, see Robert N. Bellah, *Habits of the Heart, Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (1985). Bellah provides a differentiated model of four historical strands: the biblical (Puritan), republican (Jefferson, Aristotle), utilitarian (Franklin, John Locke), and expressive individualism (contemporary psychology, Whitman). In the Japanese case the cultural tradition can also be reduced to four historical strands: an expressive strand in the indigenous and later Shinto tradition, a transcendent (like the biblical) strand in the Buddhist (Kamakura) tradition, a socio-political (like the republican) strand in the Confucian tradition, and a utilitarian strand in the modernist tradition (Yukichi Fukuzawa, et al.) since the Meiji period.

25. For further discussion see my articles "The Individuation of the Self in Japanese History" (1977) and "The Problem of Transcendence in Comparative Religion: The Quest for the Sacred in Kamakura Buddhism" (1981b).

26. This phenomenon of the collapse of transcendent faith or "submerged transcendence" occurs repeatedly in Japanese history. For a historical discussion of Jodoshinshu or Shinran's case, see Minor L. Rogers, "Rennyo Shonin, 1415-1499: A Transformation of Shin Piety" (1972) and "The Shin Faith of Rennyo" (1982). For a theoretical discussion of how the "ground bass" (an indigenous strand of Japanese religion functioning constantly in interaction with the historically developing major strands) brings about repeatedly a "submerged transcendence," see Bellah 1962, 1971, and for case studies 1965a, 1965b. For the most recent Japanese discussion, see Maruyama Masao, "Genkei, koso, shit-suyo teion—Nihon shisoshi hohoron ni tsuite no watakushi no ayumi" [Prototype, substratum, basso ostinato—changes in my thinking regarding methodology in the history of Japanese thought] (1984).

27. For further discussion, see my article "The Individuation of the Self in Japanese History" (1977:32f.).

28. John Hall in his introduction to *Government and Local Power in Japan, 500 to 1700* (1966:7), says: "The familial ingredient in Japan's political heritage, while being transformed under changing conditions of culture and political ideology, nonetheless formed a constant and important element linking the social hierarchies to the power structure at all levels. The tendency of the Japanese to fictionalize superior-inferior relations by conceiving of them in familial terms is the best example of this."

29. Ancient Israel's covenant relationship of a superior-inferior

relationship between Yahweh and Israel and the more egalitarian relations between the brothers (tribes) needs to be juxtaposed with *uji-be* or familial system of early Japan. See note 28 above.

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## New Religious Movements and Missiological Surprises

STAN NUSSBAUM

*This is the last in a four-part series on the significance of new religious movements in the third world for missiology and missionary preparation.*

The first three articles in this series have attempted to show that the study of new religious movements has important implications for the understanding of several major missiological issues of our day including partnership, dialogue, church growth and contextualization. In this final article a different dimension of the significance of new movements will be considered. We leave the accepted missiological agenda and turn to some surprises, some issues which are not on that agenda but should be. We are forced to consider these new and important issues if we begin not with our set agenda but rather with the actual phenomena of new religious movements.

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### A theology of nations and languages

The first of these issues is what we may call ethnicity. Western missiology has rarely articulated a theology of nations and languages, and Western theology has never considered ethnicity as a fundamental theological category. The vacuum created by this theological and missiological deficiency has been filled in various ways in mission history, most often by the equation of Western civilization with Christianity. In its crassest form this theology of nations makes one nation, such as England or America, the agent of salvation for all the rest. The English, French, or German language is considered to be theologically capable of carrying the Christian message much more adequately than local languages elsewhere. Neckties, stained glass, and hymn tunes are exported as if they were religiously superior to the local ethnic alternatives. These well-known mistakes are theologies of ethnicity which result from doing theology by default.

There have been two conspicuous quasi-Christian attempts to articulate a theology of ethnicity in our century, Nazism and apartheid. Both involved a concept of racial

destiny and both, from a missiological point of view, were unmitigated disasters. The currently popular myth in reaction to these movements is that all races and nations are equal, but this half-truth simply glosses over the fundamental problem of ethnicity. People the world over do not see their own ethnic and linguistic identity as inconsequential.

The myth of ethnic equality pits "human rights" against "racism" and in the process emphasizes the "human" aspect of identity so strongly that the ethnic aspect is discounted almost as much as it has been in Western theology, where people are spoken of as generic human beings. People are "sinners" and the theologian does not care if they are Japanese sinners, Kurdish sinners, or Paraguayan sinners. In a different theological camp, people are seen as "oppressed" or "oppressors," but again no theological significance is given to the question of whether the oppressed are Palestinian, South African, or Lithuanian.

When Western theology does consider language and culture, it treats them as a sub-category of something else. The traditional Roman Catholic idea of a mosaic of cultures each having some God-given gifts to bring into the universal church treats ethnicity as an aspect of ecclesiology. Not far removed is the evangelical perspective espoused by Don Richardson. Finding "redemptive analogies" placed by God within each culture, he treats culture as an aspect of evangelism. Similarly the homogenous unit principle, now nearly abandoned by the church growth school, offered a theology of ethnic groups which was criticized for reducing ethnic issues to the category of missiological strategy.<sup>1</sup>

One important exception to this reductionist pattern must be mentioned. Walbert Buhlmann's *The Chosen Peoples*<sup>2</sup> does tackle ethnicity as a basic theological category. It is significant that this is done by a theologian noted for novel approaches to novel issues, and that he sees this as a new issue forced onto the church's agenda by the growing interethnic contacts on a global scale.

Outside Western theology the issue of ethnicity is taken seriously everywhere except Latin America. Commenting on the meetings and debates of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), the black American theologian James Cone notes that repeatedly "many Latin Americans are finding themselves alone defending the exclusive priority of class"<sup>3</sup> as a theological issue. All the other third-world representatives assume ethnicity is important, and it is not hard to imagine that they would criticize Latin Americans for blindness to the one ethnic issue in their own experiences, that is, with respect to the indigenous peoples who today in Brazil are going through the traumatic experiences similar to those of native Americans a hundred years ago. Even in the third world, however, the approaches to this issue may carry rather tentative titles such as "Some Reflections Towards a Theology of Ethnicity."<sup>4</sup> One gets the impression that the third world is waking up to the ethnic issue sooner than the West, but it is not yet fully awake. Much work remains to be done.

This is the point at which the study of new movements is relevant to missiologists. The new movements have not been content to overlook the issue or treat it tentatively. They often accept ethnicity as a major fact of life and consciously articulate a theology around it. We can only scratch the surface of a few of the ways in which they do this.

The Rastafari are one clear example. Blackness, embodied in Ras Tafari (Haile Selassie), is the focal point of

the entire religion. The black people will not suffer forever in an alien, wicked, and oppressive land (Babylon). They have a destiny. A key indicator of the fact that the Rastafari see the movement as a means to power, a means of taking control of their world instead of being controlled by it, is their takeover of the English language.<sup>5</sup>

The Rastafari deliberately set out to put the English language right. They claim the authority to determine what is "correct" English usage. Instead of the usual English distinction between I and me or the common Jamaican usage of me instead of I, the Rastafari say only I and never me. Other words are "rectified" in ways that white people never thought of—"oppressors" do not "press people up"; they "press people down" so they should be called "downpressors." These are not playful alterations but powerful symbols. The speakers are no longer people at the bottom of society who can be told they do not speak English correctly, but are the ones who invent, refine, and control the language.

The development of a culturally distinctive type of music, *reggae*, is no accident. Next to language, music is perhaps the most obvious and distinctive feature of cultural identity. Reggae music is a sign that the Rastas do not want an identity derived from any other culture. They want a recognizably new one, a creation of their own culture. The development and affirmation of this cultural identity is a central concern of the religion, not a sub-category of some other matter.

The Unification Church takes the issue of cultural identity just as seriously as the Rastafari movement. There is a specific theology of the nations of the East (China, Korea, and Japan) and of Korea in particular. It was not accidental that God's special messenger for this age, Rev. Sun Yung Moon, was born a Korean. This was a theological necessity.<sup>6</sup>

However, Korean-ness does not play the same role for the Unification Church as blackness does for the Rastafari. The value of Korean-ness is asserted not in contrast to the surrounding world but rather in harmony with it. The role of the Korean messiah is to unite that world. Thus *The Divine Principle*, the authoritative book of Unification Church theology, ends with a one-page treatment of the language problem resulting from the tower of Babel. The conclusion is, "Therefore, in order that the ideal world of one great family, under the Lord of the Second Advent as the True Parent, might be realized, all languages must necessarily be unified. . . . The whole of mankind will become one people speaking one language, thus establishing one world of one culture."<sup>7</sup>

The amount of money which the Unification Church spends in sponsoring conferences for people who are not members makes sense once this priority of the movement is understood. So does the almost bewildering array of organizations, publications, and programs. They all relate to this basic item on its agenda. For example, the Religious Youth Service brings together intercultural and inter-religious teams for cooperative work projects. The 1989 application form says, "Participants will relate to each other across religious, national, racial, and cultural lines. It is important, therefore, that applicants have the humility and desire to learn about other cultures and religions, and a willingness to work together with brothers and sisters representing other nations."

A third and lesser-known approach to the relation of ethnicity and religion is Godianism, a movement developed by a Nigerian, K. O. K. Onyiah, and defined as "a

philosophical evaluation and appropriate identification of Africa's traditional religious habits and practices capable of universal application."<sup>8</sup> Reacting against the bitter and often bloody rivalry between Christianity and Islam in Nigeria, Onyioha claims that any religion which can be traced to a human founder will alienate those who are not of that founder's race. Godianism, a name which intentionally replaces the "Christ" in "Christianity" with the term "God," transcends this problem because it is not "founded" but rather recognized or synthesized—it is the ancient African religion, the one true and original religion, in a modern form.

From this starting point Onyioha proceeds to interpret slavery as "a blessing in disguise . . . an advance design by God to create an African platform abroad from which in the fullness of time to launch a new religious civilization. . . ."<sup>9</sup> He made an evangelistic trip to recruit black students on American university campuses in 1975 and declared that both John Kennedy and Martin Luther King were saints in his religion. His efforts have not been very successful so far. Perhaps Godianism is only a religion of the "Black Man's Burden," a reversed mirror image of that old myth of the white nations as the world's saviors which is encapsulated in Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden." Nevertheless, it is an important example of a religious system which treats cultural identity as a central theological problem.

The three movements mentioned so far (Rastas, Unification Church, and Godianism) are not generally accepted as Christian churches, and of these three only the Unification Church would like to be. We should note that the issue of ethnicity is central not only in groups like these but also in those which are much more Christian in content. For example, the Harrist Church in Ivory Coast is currently struggling with this issue. Is the Prophet Harris a "black Christ" (which implies that Africans have a direct link to God, untainted by any "white" connection such as Jesus of Nazareth) or is he only a pointer to Jesus, the Christ? Are the white countries rich because they have accepted the Christian gospel and the black countries poor because they did not receive it? Was Harris God's gift to the Africans, the door by which the gospel and blessings of the white nations were made available at last to the blacks? These are obviously not incidental theological concerns, and they are causing serious tensions within the church at present. The way these questions are answered will determine the kind of gospel the church will preach, the extent to which it feels it belongs with Christians of other races, and the level of recognition which Christians elsewhere give to it. Ethnicity is the hinge issue on which all the other theological issues turn.

### The China-Africa connection

Ethnicity is not the only surprise awaiting missiologists who venture to study new movements. Consider the following. There is little connection between China and Africa on most missiological agendas. Each is important to many people, but very few people are directly concerned with both. In this age of specialized studies, who would dare to straddle the two fields in spite of the tempting leads which would invite comparisons between China and Africa, such as a concrete-relational style of thinking, a pragmatic approach to life, and ancestral veneration as a major cultural value?

These may be superficial (or may not be) but there is another type of comparison which I believe is highly sig-

nificant and deserves much more exploration. Consider these observations about the house church movement in China by Arthur Glasser.

*This tremendous Christward movement is almost entirely a peasant phenomenon. It has barely touched the cities, much less the educated Chinese. Some Chinese Christian scholars say that its current impact on the nation is almost negligible. Those who have interviewed many non-Christian Chinese graduate students currently in the West find them to be totally unaware of this peasant movement. Furthermore, China's rural house-church believers are largely untaught and poorly led. I've heard responsible Chinese Christian scholars say that this movement is perilously close to becoming something not unlike Africa's independent churches—uneven mixtures of biblical faith and animistic folk religion.*<sup>10</sup>

While we may question Glasser's verdict about African independent churches, the parallel dynamics in the Chinese and African situations should be carefully noted: rapid expansion of churches, no central administrative control, little or no theological training, no direct missionary influence, heavy emphasis on healing and religious experiences, some unfamiliar theological developments, and as mentioned above, some unexplored general similarities between Chinese and African cultures.

Given these parallels in the two situations, one may be surprised to note that Western mission agencies, both ecumenical and evangelical, apply nearly opposite strategies in China and Africa today. In general the ecumenicals have taken an attitude in favor of African independent churches and against the house church movement in China. The World Council of Churches has admitted some African independent churches to membership, established links with the Organization of African Instituted Churches based in Nairobi, and made efforts to ensure that independent church leaders receive a reasonable share of scholarships for overseas study. It was WCC members who first pleaded the cause of the independent churches in the West in the 1960s when the evangelicals had no time for them at all. Conspicuous WCC leaders such as John Mbiti have written favorably of the African independent church movement even though they are well aware that many church leaders in African countries want nothing to do with independent churches.<sup>11</sup>

In China the case is just the reverse. The WCC has aligned itself lock, stock, and barrel with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement as the official representatives of all Protestants in China. The leaders of the Three-Self Movement have, at least officially, taken the same attitude toward the house church movement which African church leaders took toward the independent churches for many years, saying that those do-it-yourself churches either do not exist or, if they do exist, they do not count, and in any case they should join "us" if they want recognition. Thus, when the Three-Self Movement says there are about four million Christians in China, ecumenicals in the West agree and dismiss the figure of forty million as a wild exaggeration.<sup>12</sup> The WCC seems unwilling to suggest to the Chinese church leadership, as it does to African church leaders, that the Christian movements not linked to the established WCC member churches should be more positively regarded.

On the evangelical side, the China and Africa strategies also appear self-contradictory. While some evangelicals have become involved with African independent churches, the popular evangelical reading is still the one



given by Glasser, "uneven mixtures of faith and animistic folk religion."<sup>13</sup> He therefore raises the legitimate question of the reason that evangelicals are so unreserved and unquestioning in their endorsement of the house church movement in China as a sign of the work of God. Why indeed should they be so optimistic about the house church movement and so pessimistic about the African independent churches?

These inconsistencies in ecumenical and evangelical policies pose a major unrecognized missiological problem. The fundamental stances have emerged from a number of accidents of history which are now coloring the perceptions both groups have of new movements in China and Africa. This will not do. Missiologists, policymakers, missionaries, and especially local leaders of mission-founded churches need to face the incongruity and make more realistic assessments of the movements in both regions. Needless to say, this has immense implications for mission policy and program.

### The New Age Movement

The New Age Movement, with its myriad forms and organizations, is another new movement which has the potential to surprise and shake up the missiological agenda. It is sometimes on the agenda<sup>14</sup> but is not given a very high place, perhaps because it deals primarily with the West and our "mission" agenda still tends to focus on what happens overseas. The New Age Movement also may be overlooked because its marked differences from other new religious movements are not adequately recognized. To pose the question, "What is the New Age Movement?" is already to point to the first of these differences. It is relatively easy to identify other movements such as the Rastafari and the Unification Church, but the New Age Movement has no single center, no authoritative spokesperson, no required creed, no clear style of worship, and no exclusive membership. It is literally a "movement" and not an organization.

In what direction is it moving? Toward the transformation of both secularism and Christianity (and other religions) into its allies as a new worldview uniting and dominating the whole planet. There is not space here to defend this debatable thesis. I shall only offer it as a plausible hypothesis in order to point briefly to the implications it would have for Christian mission if it were proved true.

The transformation which the New Age seeks is often spoken of in terms such as these: "There is something more to us and our universe, and it is rich with the potential of the unknown. They (the 'visitors') have caused me to slough off my old view of the world like the dismal skin that it was and seek a completely new vision of this magnificent, mysterious, and fiercely alive universe."<sup>15</sup> This "new" view, ironically, would appear as very old hat to primal peoples around the world, and New Age writers such as Castaneda explicitly acknowledge their primal roots. It looks absolutely new to Westerners because of their almost absolute ignorance of primal religion.<sup>16</sup>

The missiological point is that novelty (or perceived novelty) is directly proportional to the speed at which a message will spread and the impact it will have.<sup>17</sup> The first missionaries in primal cultures often profited from this principle and the Christian message swept through those cultures, especially in Africa and Melanesia, at terrific speed. Now the tables are turned. The primal "gospel" is zipping through North America, preached by "mis-

sionaries" like Shirley MacLaine. Missiologists must take note because New Age thinking shakes the foundations of Christian mission as it has been understood up till now. If we do not take the New Age encroachments into some sections of the church seriously, we are merely doing our mission business while the shop burns down.<sup>18</sup>

If the world around us gradually changes so that New Age thought competes with secularism as the dominant worldview, then a new missiological challenge will be upon us. The first step in the evangelistic process will no longer be to get the man in the street to become religious rather than nonreligious, but rather to help him to become Christian rather than merely "religious" in a New Age sense. We will have to contextualize the gospel in an appropriate form for the newly religiositized culture around us, just as cross-cultural missionaries now have to contextualize the gospel when they move into a new setting.

This is an odd situation with such radical implications for the church in general that one must wonder whether anyone will even begin to take them seriously. What it means is that missiologists, used to thinking about other cultures, will need to become the leaders and advisers of the church in North America at all levels. Will the pastors, church presidents, theologians, Biblical scholars, and Christian educators let us missiologists put the crown of seminary power and influence on our heads? Not until they realize that the church as a whole in North America is headed for its first cross-cultural experience right in its own backyard. A new culture is arriving there. Unless the church wants to endure the confusion, frustration, and impotence symptomatic of culture shock, it must prepare itself to make the adjustments needed to communicate effectively in a different cultural setting.

I am not speaking merely about a few people from other cultures moving into North America and bringing their culture with them but a general cultural shift in middle America in a New Age direction. Missiologists are the people in the best position to perceive the shift and interpret it to the church in general, but there still seems to be a doubt about whether the New Age belongs on their agenda because it is not "overseas." This is unbelievable! How can we come up against a momentous issue like this and waste time discussing which department in the seminary should deal with it? They all should, and the missiologists should be explaining why.<sup>19</sup>

When they start to explain how the church in North America should approach the religiosity of the New Age, missiologists will find one final surprise in their studies. The issues with which North Americans will be amateurishly struggling for the first time—channeling, veneration of nature, combining Christian beliefs with animism—are the very issues with which new religious movements in the third world have been dealing pastorally, theologically, and almost routinely, for a long time. These movements display a whole range of options of relating the Christian faith to these issues, but once again it is the missiologists who will carry the responsibility to dig out the relevant material and present it to the rest of the church.

Why missiologists? Because theologians in the West are not used to taking their cues from untrained and questionably Christian religious leaders in the third world. However, those leaders who have been considered backward and "untheological" may now turn out to be on the cutting edge of theological development, several jumps ahead of their Western professional counterparts. The last have indeed become first.

## Conclusion

We have started this series of articles by studying "them," the new religious movements, and ended by studying "us," the North American church and its future. Along the way we have seen that new religious movements are relevant to missiology at virtually all points, whether expected or unexpected.

Missiology's basic task is to grapple with religious reality in all its forms. Since new religious movements worldwide are a major part of that reality, they should not be mere footnotes in missionary preparation. They are significant indicators of the dynamics of religious change and they lead the church into the discussion of issues which loom large in the future of every continent.

## Notes

1. David J. Bosch, "The Structure of Mission: an Exposition of Matthew 28:16-20," in ed. Wilbert R. Shenk, *Exploring Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 235-240.
2. Middlegreen, Slough: St. Paul, 1982.
3. James Cone, Preface, ed. Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, *Minjung Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1981), pp. xv, xviii-xix. Extensive bibliography included.
4. N. Abeyasingha in *Logos* (Colombo, Sri Lanka) 24(1), 1985, 70-78.
5. See Laurence A. Breiner, "The English Bible in Jamaican Rastafarianism," *Journal of Religious Thought* 42(2), 1985-86, 30-43.
6. The rationale for Korea's special status is explained in a key concluding section of *The Divine Principle* (pp. 519-532). The argument begins by extrapolating from Revelation 7:2 (the "angel" coming from "the rising of the sun" to seal God's people on their foreheads). The "angel" is Christ at his second advent and the rising of the sun refers to a nation in the East. China and Japan are then disqualified, five attributes of the chosen nation are listed, and Korea is described as the unique fulfiller of all five.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 536.
8. K. O. K. Onyioha, "Godianism: Its Derivation and Contents," in *Godianism: Papers Presented to the Conference of Traditional Religions of Nigeria*, May 22, 1975 (s.n., n.d.), pp. 6-37. Copy in the Harold Turner Collection, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
10. Arthur Glasser, "Mission in the 1990s: Two Views," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 13(1), 1989, 7.
11. John Mbiti, "What God Is Saying Through the African Independent Churches to the Western Churches," *Risk* 7(3), 1971, 556-58, and "Faith, Hope and Love in the African Independent Church Movement," *Study Encounter* 10(3), 1974, 1-19.
12. Glasser, op. cit., estimates "30 to 50 million." Ecumenicals do sometimes admit that the four million estimate is "conservative." For example, see Jean Woo, "The Movement of the Spirit in China," *China Notes* (NCC-USA) 26(4), 1988, 493.
13. Glasser, op. cit.
14. Roelf Kuitse, "Neo-Paganism," *Mission Focus* 16(3), 1988, 41-43. Neo-paganism is one aspect of the New Age, illustrative of many of the components of the broader movement.
15. Whitley Streiber, *Transformation: the Breakthrough* (New York: Beech Tree Books, William Morrow, 1988), inside front cover.
16. For an excellent description of the New Age views including their primal roots, see the chapter, "A Separate Universe: the New Consciousness" in James W. Sire's *The Universe Next Door* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1976), pp. 150-203.

## MCC Occasional Papers Updated Listing

1. *Coptic Orthodox Church: Five essays* by Vern Ratzlaff. May 1988.
2. *Identification with the people in a revolutionary situation* by Gerald Schlabach, with a case study by Ovidio Flores and a response by Susan Classen. May 1988.
3. *Listening to the church: Mennonite ministry in South Africa* by Robert Herr and Judy Zimmerman-Herr. June 1988.
4. *A study of three cookstove models* by David and Jan Preheim Bartel. June 1988.
5. *Response of non-governmental organizations to conflict situations* by Daniel G. Maxwell. June 1988.
6. *Institutionalized poverty and its implications for MCC's organization and structure* by Sanford Boshart. July 1988.
7. *Mennonites in ecumenical dialogue on peace and justice* by John Richard Burkholder. August 1988.
8. *Animation in Haiti: MCC Haiti's experience with rural community development* by Barry C. Bartel. February 1989.

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17. Eugene Nida, *Message and Mission* (New York: Harper, 1960; repr. Pasadena: Wm. Carey Library, 1972), pp. 72-73.
18. If Anabaptists continue to insist on a sharp distinction between church and world as basic and opposed categories in missiological thought, then we are committing the cardinal sin in the New Age (divisiveness) and our view of mission will be classed with that of people like Khomeini and Terre-Blanche. Our methods are different, but the New Age will not care. We are guilty of "us-them" categorization, and any form of that kind of thinking is associated with a previous age, not the New Age.
19. This does not mean to exclude other disciplines. Some important work is being done by non-missiologists already such as Norman Geisler's philosophical analysis of the New Age movement in the *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 11(4), 1987, 302-320.

## In Review

**Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader.** By Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981, 846 pp., \$16.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Henry J. Schmidt

This volume was designed as a core textbook for the institute of international studies and intended as a resource for courses in missiology. It highlights the need for engagement in reaching "all the world's unreached peoples" through a compilation of leading articles by no less than seventy authors, together with mission reviews and case studies focusing on the World Christian Movement. Even though it does not break new ground in terms of content, the editors have provided a prolific range of substantive missiological reading in a single volume.

The concerns expressed in the book are interdisciplinary in nature, treating biblical, theological, anthropological, and sociological issues within the missiological framework. The first section (15 contributions) anchors the commitment to global mission in the biblical perspective of God's call and the nature of the church (Stott, Snyder, Glasser, Ladd, Richardson). The historical perspective is divided into three sections: the expansion; pioneers (including Carey, Hudson, Taylor, Zwemer, and Mott); as well as the status and future of the Christian movement (21 essays). The last historical segment is particularly dominated by the overarching missiological themes of "people movements" (Donald McGavran) and "unreached people groups" (Ralph Winter). The cultural perspective (18 articles including those by Hesselgrave, Hiebert, Smalley, and Nida) provides important views on issues relating to cross-cultural communication, cultural diversity, and interaction between gospel and culture. The complete Willowbank report (Lausanne Committee) concludes this division.

The final section (strategic perspectives) contains 44 articles and is the most elaborate in the volume. There are five subsections: strategies for evangelization, church planting, development, Christian teamwork, and discipleship. It includes 12 case studies of pioneer church plantings in different geographic, cultural, social, and religious contexts. The book appropriately concludes with a challenge from Andrew Murray's nineteenth-century classical work, (*Key to the Missionary Problem*), "the missionary problem is a personal one."

While the book covers a broad range of missiological topics, it does so basically

from an evangelical perspective. It does not include current third-world missiological issues or perspectives from the broader ecumenical mission stream. In terms of informing and activating support for reaching those societies of the world where there is "no culturally, relevant evangelizing church," the volume deserves high marks. The provocative questions at the end of each article make this material well suited for discussion and study groups in local churches. A thorough index makes this *Reader* even more useful. Professors, missionaries, pastors, mission candidates/board members/executives will find much in the volume to stimulate their mission vision and strategic planning.

Henry J. Schmidt is Associate Professor of World Mission and Director of the Center for Training in Mission/Evangelism at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

**Missionary Spirituality: For the Praise of His Glory.** By Teresa Clements. (Vol. 31, The Living Flame Series.) Dublin, Ireland: Carmelite Centre of Spirituality, 1987, 100 pp., 2.50 in Irish pounds (pb)

Reviewed by Dawn Ruth Nelson

This little book, published in Ireland by a missionary sister, stresses the importance of our connection to Christ as the basis of our mission. The book is structured around the ancient Irish prayer called *The Breastplate of St. Patrick*:

Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me,  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Sister Clements emphasizes that we are called as missionaries to be *with* Christ, in intimacy, as the disciples were called to be his companions. We are also called to be sent out, and it is in the balance of the two that we find a missionary spirituality. "The heart of the apostolic call ... has two dimensions: to be with Jesus as his companions, and also to be sent out to proclaim the message. Both are necessary. One dimension without the other destroys the essential nature of the apostolic call" (p. 16).

In exploring Mark's account of Jesus' calling the disciples, the author points that "the apostles are not called to be with Jesus so that he may instruct them and then send them out. Rather it is the actual being with Jesus himself, in an intimate relationship

with him, that leads them to witness and proclaim the good news to others ... [in the sending out] there is no statement of what is to be proclaimed, as it is to Jesus himself that they bear witness" (p. 16). Our knowing Christ gives us our message, our motivation, and our power.

Using the spirituality of the early Celtic missionaries who went out from Ireland in the Middle Ages to all parts of Europe, and the more recent experiences of modern-day Irish missionaries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, Sister Clements then deals with the intriguing themes of the missionary as pilgrim and guest, and the centrality of the cross and compassion in missionary spirituality. She ends with a chapter on celebration.

The book accomplishes what the author describes as her purpose: "What is needed is a small book, not too difficult to read, that busy missionaries can pick up at odd moments ... and be helped to reflect on their life and spirituality" (p. 5). We are well reminded that when we "go out," "it is not only Christ whom we proclaim, but Christ whom we go to seek" (p. 20).

Dawn Ruth Nelson and her husband, Paul, are overseas workers with Mennonite Board of Missions in Dublin, Ireland, since 1979.

**The Mission of the Church.** By Jesse C. Fletcher. Layman's Library of Christian Doctrine Series. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1988, 139 pp., \$5.95.

Reviewed by Rod Zook

Jesse Fletcher's book, *The Mission of the Church*, is part of an extensive series introducing doctrines and theology which are central to the life of the church. The series was intentionally written in simple language to be useful to a nonscholarly audience as a ready reference tool.

In developing a straightforward treatment of the themes of the mission of the church in the world, Fletcher displays a good depth of understanding. He distills the important missiological themes which have been debated and developed throughout the history of the church into manageable, yet trenchant reading. The book sustains interest through clear organization and careful illustrations.

On the surface the book's scope seems far too large for such a small volume. The author, however, keeps the issues clearly focused and even offers a glimpse into the future of mission.

This is not a book for deep discussion and new insights. It is, however, a helpful



overview for world mission which can provide a catalyst toward mission by summarizing the issues. The book also includes a good beginning bibliography for those wishing to explore the themes of mission more fully.

*Rod Zook, currently pastor of the Butler Mennonite Brethren Church in Fresno, California, previously held a pastoral ministry/church planting assignment in Quebec.*

***Yahweh Is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel.*** By Millard Lind. Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1980, 232 pp., \$11.95; in Canada \$16.75 (pb)

#### Reviewed by Allen R. Guenther

This revision of Lind's doctoral dissertation is one of the most substantial treatments of the theology of Israelite (OT) warfare. Lind builds on the work of his predecessors in affirming that "the present Old Testament narratives for the most part emphasize Yahweh's miracle of holy war and downgrade human fighting" (p. 31). Many of the divinely approved wars are marked by Israel occupying a secondary role. Yahweh fights for his people, not through them.

His arguments are based on the poetic accounts of the Songs of Miriam/Moses (Exod. 15) and of Deborah (Judg. 5). These poems provide a window into the earliest theology of warfare. They establish the primacy of Yahweh as king and as warrior; Israel is an observer or a minor participant in the war.

The paradigm for the relative roles of Yahweh and his people is the exodus event, and in particular, the crossing of the Red Sea. As king, Yahweh assumes the functions of leading his people to victory as well as of governing his people through a prophet. These interrelated themes of warfare, kingship, and the mediatorial role of the Yahwistic prophet are then traced through the various literary strands of the Old Testament.

Lind sees the monarchy in negative terms: Israel's desire for a king was inherently wrong (1 Sam. 8), though the Deuteronomist accepted it as a divine concession (Deut. 17). Consequently, the kings of Israel and Judah began to assume the role of Yahweh, giving rise to political and military policies determined by human wisdom rather than Yahweh's prophetic word.

The book does not address the ethical

question of Israel's participation in the wars of Yahweh in response to his express command. Nor is it clear whether the exodus paradigm, if followed consistently, would have meant that Israel would never have needed to fight; Yahweh would have conquered all her enemies by miraculous deeds. Finally, the book does not attempt to harmonize the different traditions which leaves the modern reader with the question of which tradition contains the (normative) paradigm for today.

*Allen R. Guenther is associate professor of Old Testament, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.*

***Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice, and Peace.*** By Perry B. Yoder. Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1987, 154 pp., \$14.95 (pb)

#### Reviewed by Allen R. Guenther

In *Shalom* Yoder maps the contours of a primary biblical concept in everyday language. His objective is to show the configuration of the rich content of *shalom* in the light of the questions raised by his experience in the Philippines during the Marcos regime. It is not a polemic for liberation theology, although it has much to say about the character of the gospel in both third- and first-world settings.

Yoder's concern is to examine the connections between the concept of *shalom* and "other core aspects of biblical faith: justice and salvation, for example; and how does it relate to what we see of God in Jesus" (p. 7). This makes the book more a study in biblical theology than in the meaning of a word, since the concept of *shalom* arches over both Testaments. At the same time, Yoder roots his discussion of the concept in the study of the rich range of contexts in which *shalom* appears.

Three shades of meaning are to be found in the biblical occurrences of *shalom*. "First, it can refer to a material and physical state of affairs, this being its most frequent usage. It can also refer to relationships, and here it comes closest to the English word *peace*. And finally, it also has a moral sense, which is its least frequent meaning" (pp. 10-11). Each of these aspects points to the goal of promoting the well-being (physical, material, social, international) of the individual and society. That makes *shalom* a positive concept, the

goal in human relationships, integrally related to the process of justice.

This slender, readable volume is filled with a wealth of insight into basic biblical truths which cluster around the concept of *shalom*.

*Allen R. Guenther is associate professor of Old Testament, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.*

***God's Commissioned People.*** By M. Thomas Starkes. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1984, 384 pp., \$12.95 (pb)

#### Reviewed by Valdemar Kroker

Why another work on the history of missions now, the author asks? It is clear that one reason is his passion for mission. But he is also convinced of its necessity because of major shifts in modern mission as well as changes around the globe. One change is that the West is becoming increasingly aware of the growing body of Christ in the two-thirds world. That means that mission is becoming a two-way street and faces us with new challenges.

Starkes' approach is very appropriate. His purpose is (a) to seek a balance between "the study of individuals and movements"; (b) to give attention "to the interaction between mission agencies"; and (c) to point the reader "to the future" (p. 24-25).

The author summarizes all major periods of 2,000 years of mission history. At the same time he draws attention to people and movements not as well known as the Moravians or William Carey. For instance, the reader will find information about the first Protestant church building in South America in 1819 and about the beginning of missionary work in the Muslim country of Somalia in 1953. Those who have not heard of Hugo Grotius or Bartolomé de Las Casas have a chance to get acquainted with them as well.

"Let the reader embark on the reading of mission history, knowing that exposure to the story may be contagious and that Christian action may result, even in the present," Starkes challenges (p. 29).

This interesting and stimulating book helps Christians become informed and excited about world mission.

*Valdemar Kroker, former pastor of a Mennonite Brethren church in Sao Paulo, Brazil, is now assistant pastor at Clovis United Methodist Church and a student at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary.*

***Mother of an Army.*** By Charles Ludwig. Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1987, 237 pp., \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Diane Payette-Bucci

Being an agent of change in society and in the church is an important mission to which Catherine Mumford Booth was clearly committed. The preaching of salvation, temperance, and equal rights for women were the issues she fought for throughout her life.

Raised by a persevering mother and a father who was an ardent temperance worker before he began to drink, Catherine grew up with an unusual thirst for knowledge and spirituality. Her frail physical condition caused by tuberculosis at age 18 did not prevent her from raising eight children and becoming co-founder of the Salvation Army with her husband, William Booth. Despite adversity, she preached at evangelistic and revival meetings whenever she could. She published her first pamphlet in 1859 titled "Female Ministry," and subsequently became a pioneer of women's work, a prominent feature of the Salvation Army.

Catherine had a deep burden for the oppressed, the poor, the addicted, and the prostitutes, and for more than 30 years gave of herself in the ministry of evangelization in the United Kingdom.

What is missing in Ludwig's book is an excursion into Catherine's struggles and discouragements. Her humanness seems to be hidden behind her heroic spirituality. Although exemplary for those wanting to commit themselves to Christian ministry, Ludwig's picture of Catherine Booth seems inaccessible for the average believer.

Reading this story of Catherine Mumford Booth is nevertheless captivating. The author adds numerous historical details of the early Wesleyan movement and the Methodist New Connexion, as well as the economic and social state of the United Kingdom in the late 19th century. This well-written biographical novel will stir and inform its readers.

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*Diane Payette-Bucci, a 1988 graduate in pastoral counseling, is now chaplain at Kings View Center in Reedley, California.*

***A People for His Name.*** By Paul A. Beals. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988, 234 pp., \$9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Tim Geddert

The author's thesis is, "In world missions, the local church is the biblical sending

body through which missionaries serve worldwide, aided by the mission agency and the Christian school. I place emphasis upon the practical outworking of the missions responsibilities of the local churches" (p. xiii).

The operative word is "practical." The book contains thousands of very specific suggestions and/or directions to churches, agencies, missionaries, and theological schools. The "proper way" for them to carry out every imaginable aspect of their work is carefully delineated from the exact composition of a church's mission committee (p.96) to the kind of missionary map that should be affixed to the back wall of the church (p.104).

What if churches do not have a suitable "back wall"? Or what if they do not believe that "the pastor" should serve as an ex-officio member on all committees?

Behind all the practical suggestions loom large assumptions about what it means for a church or a missionary to be "biblical." The author's assumptions (often unstated and sometimes weakly denied) seem to be: (1) missionaries *evangelize*; they do not care for social needs; (2) stateside missions are less important than foreign missions; (3) men are the *real* missionaries—the primary tasks of women are in the home; (4) missions are primarily an American enterprise; (5) the Old Testament is primarily a prediction book; (6) apart from the Great Commission, the life and teaching of Jesus has little to contribute to a mission theology; (7) eschatology (i.e., God's future plans for Israel) is one of the central aspects of doctrinal statements; (8) evangelical mission agencies "should not cooperate with ecumenically-oriented groups"; (9) "the cold finger of apostasy" is the great danger of theological schools; (10) "the pastor" (always singular and male) is expositor, intercessor, educator, organizer, recruiter, counselor, helper (i.e., he arranges for missionary appointees' babysitting, home rental, packing, making crates, obtaining steel drums, finding storage, etc.)—apparently that is how he fosters participation by his local church; (11) mission is best promoted by organizers not by visionaries.

This book has many valuable suggestions. But to the extent that readers do not share all the writer's assumptions, it is less practical than the author intends.

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*Tim Geddert is assistant professor of New Testament, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.*

***The Church in Mission.*** By Wilbert R. Shenk. Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1984, 71 pp., \$1.50 (pb)

Reviewed by Levi Keidel

Only a person with a thorough command of a subject could compress so much information into so little space. *The Church in Mission* is a biblical basis for mission and a historical overview of the church's mission.

In chapter one Shenk defines "mission" by exploring five human understandings of the word and by attempting to see it through the eyes of God: to bring all things together in Christ. Chapter two gives the Old Testament roots for Christian mission. "All that emerges in the New Testament is clearly rooted in the Old."

Jesus Christ is the center of mission (chapter 3). Jesus faces the issue of power by putting the kingship of God over the realm of Satan; he calls people to live under his kingly rule. Ultimately, Jesus makes his mission of preaching, teaching, healing, and confronting evil powers the mission of his disciples. While the Holy Spirit was fully present in the Messiah, his disciples were not to go forth until they too had the Spirit's power in their lives. Shenk describes from the Acts account six successive stages in the development of the church.

In chapter five Shenk divides the church's history into five successive eras of advance and decline. The seeds for the next resurgence may be planted in Africa and Latin America where current growth is most rapid.

In a final chapter Shenk describes the nature of the church as it relates to mission. The congregation must maintain a healthy balance between mission and nurture.

The bibliography and discussion questions are helpful for either individual or group study.

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*Levi Keidel is currently instructor of Mission at Columbia Bible College, Clearbrook, British Columbia.*

***Preach the Word.*** By John R. Mumaw. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1987, 286 pp., \$14.95 (pb)

**Reviewed by John Regehr**

The author, now retired, began his church ministry in 1928 and taught homiletics in his generation for 38 years. This data is significant. The language is quite dated, as is the manner of formulating ideas, as seen from a sermon introduction: "Human nature is endowed with adequate capacity to receive divine benefits." I doubt it will captivate many readers.

The first page or two of each of the 31 chapters contain the how-to material on sermon preparation. Much of this is helpful material. It would be more usable if it followed more consistently the working steps in creating a sermon. The author treats "purpose in preaching" early (ch.6), and much later returns several times to parallel ideas—"formulating a theme" (ch.21), "finding a message" (ch.27), and "sermon objectives" (ch.28). I would have preferred a much reduced book and more clearly ordered guidance in making a text into a sermon. On the other hand, if one is tired of a road map and would prefer a hike with frequent points of interest, this book will provide that.

The book is a worthy venture in that it proposes to use as illustrative material 27 sermon outlines based on the entire Ephesians epistle. However, the venture is only minimally successful. Chapter eleven opens with several pages of guidelines on interpretation, but the sermon outline based on Ephesians 2:1-3, "The Church: A Resurrected Body," does not indicate what principles of interpretation were employed.

For this part of the noble venture to have been successful, much radical editing would have been necessary. The connections between a particular aspect of sermon preparation and the sermon outline which illustrates it need to be much more deliberately and precisely made. Indeed, to illustrate an aspect of the process of sermon creation it may be better to use a portion of the sermon verbatim rather than the outline of every sermon in its entirety, as the author has done.

I hesitate to be as critical as I have been, since I too am nearing retirement.

*John Regehr is professor of Practical Theology at Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg, Manitoba.*

***Minister's Guide to Financial Planning.*** By Kenneth M. Meyer. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987, 160 pp., \$7.95 (pb)

**Reviewed by Lynford J. Becker**

The author has provided a concise and valuable resource for both ministers and laypersons. One must be aware, however, that the information dealing with tax laws may be dated or subject to interpretation and must be reviewed annually.

Several concerns regarding content could be noted. (1) The author leaves the impression that ministers are no longer eligible for an Individual Retirement Account if the employer maintains an approved pension plan. For the majority of ministers, those with an AGI of less than \$40,000 annually and filing a joint-return, the eligibility has not changed. (2) Mutual funds are strongly endorsed as an investment. "Black Monday of October 19, 1987" is a reminder that such investments, even though usually good if held long-term, can experience loss. (3) Some readers will feel uncomfortable with the suggestions on "negotiating a call." The comments underscore the tension between the call and commitment to ministry and facing the tough, realistic "dollars and good sense" issues of life. (4) The author seems to advocate that "ministry success should be rewarded monetarily." Some may take issue with that idea. (5) The emphasis on building an estate may seem too strong for those who view ministerial compensation to be appropriate if one's needs are adequately met so as "to be free to serve without fear of economic collapse or disaster."

We are indebted to the author for sharing this overview, his opinions, and his experience. The book can serve as a most helpful tool in appropriate clergy compensation planning and should be read by church members in leadership positions as well as by clergy. Financial planning related to insurance, investments, etc., become a matter of personal judgment; the ideas shared are valid and helpful but good counsel should be sought and action taken consistent with one's goals and life objectives.

*Lynford J. Becker is a Conference Minister and Stewardship Ministries Representative for the Mennonite Brethren churches in the U.S.*

***Loving God with All Your Mind: How to Survive and Prosper as a Christian in a Secular University and Post-Christian Culture.*** By Gene Edward Veith, Jr. Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1987, 160 pp., \$6.95 (pb)

**Reviewed by Henry Rempel**

The intent of the author is admirable: to provide a "map" that will enable Christians to find their way in contemporary university settings. The book makes a good beginning: "The Christian who pursues knowledge, seeks education, and explores even the most 'secular' subject is fulfilling a Christian vocation that is pleasing to God and of great importance to the church" (p.9).

The primary model presented in the book is Daniel in Babylon. The university, like Babylon, is characterized by the enemies of the Christian, including liberal theology. Its members prefer revolutionary creeds such as Marxism, are for abortions, are seeking alternatives to prisons as a means of punishing criminals, have a feminist orientation, accept evolution, practice and promote extramarital sex, and are critical of the church. In such a setting, "Christians will often feel like the Israelites besieged by the Babylonian hosts, assailed on all sides, defeated, humiliated" (p.88).

A positive element of the book are some ideas and arguments which the author has found useful in countering such obvious expressions of evil on the university campus. Also, the chapter on "The Communion of the Saints" highlights the importance of Christian fellowship as a resource for contemporary scholars.

A limitation of the book is the withdrawal by Veith from his opening claim, presented above, to a position which denies that all of the Bible and Christian thought is open to academic pursuit. With Veith we can assert that God's Word is absolute and unchanging. But Veith fails to recognize that the understanding of God's Word changes over time. As a result, his "map of the modern intellectual world" may provide temporary help for a subset of Christians from a particular church background. It is inadequate to the larger task of directing Christians as they seek to grow and serve in contemporary university settings.

*Henry Rempel is a professor in the Department of Economics, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.*



**Hispanic Ministry in North America.** By Alex D. Montoya. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987, 155 pp., \$9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Juan Martinez

The 1980s (the decade of the Hispanics) have been a time for Americans to "discover" the existence of Hispanics in the United States. Evangelicals have also participated in that discovery as can be seen in the publication of books like this one, explaining how to minister in a community often ignored in the past.

The author describes himself as an "acculturated" Hispanic who has gone through an experience of "reverse" acculturation. Having been educated in a largely Anglo environment, he returned to his roots to become successful in ministry. Montoya uses this background and his ministry experience to challenge his readers to minister among Hispanics.

The eleven chapters of the book deal with various topics, emphasizing the need to develop strong independent Hispanic congregations. Any other type of ministry is not likely to have a lasting impact. The focus is on the need to allow Hispanic churches to develop their own worship styles. The author describes the informal, spontaneous, and joyous nature of Hispanic worship and calls on leaders not to impose traditional Anglo worship patterns.

But the book is weakened by a lack of thorough analysis at several levels. It offers a challenge to church planting, but no models of what is being (or can be) done. There are some references to past ministry in the Hispanic community, but no historical review, analysis, and/or critique of previous ministry efforts. On another level, although the author presents three chapters on Hispanic culture, none of them include a historical background of the Hispanic experience in the U.S. There is no accounting for the influences of racism and prejudice, no differentiation of the various Hispanic communities in the U.S., no reference to the growing influence of the Spanish language in the U.S., etc. At times the author presents a fairly negative view of the Hispanic community.

A more thorough analysis would have given the reader a better understanding of *Hispanic Ministry in North America*. Yet this book offers an important challenge, that of the need to minister in the Hispanic community and to develop strong Hispanic churches. This is a call evangelicals dare not ignore.

Juan Martinez is Hispanic Ministries Coordinator for (PDC) of the Mennonite Brethren.

**Has the Church Misread the Bible?: The History of Interpretation in the Light of Contemporary Issues.** By Moises Silva. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987, 144 pp., \$12.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Linda Suderman

Silva's book is the first in a series on contemporary issues in biblical interpretation. The series is not concerned with evaluating the specific tools used in biblical interpretation, but rather in examining the basic elements that influence our understanding of the Scriptures.

All interpreters regardless of the time period in which they live face four critical tensions. Is the Bible divine or human? Literal or figurative? Clear or obscure? Relative or absolute?

The bulk of the book provides a clearer understanding of the issues involved in each tension and how the conclusions influence the interpretation of Scripture. Silva is not afraid to ask the hard questions involved in each tension. He concludes that the Holy Spirit has slowly guided believers to a fuller understanding of divine revelation in history. I want to agree with him, but I wonder if more knowledge always increases understanding? I hope it does.

Is it possible to preach with authority with imperfect interpretation? I believe Silva would say "yes." I was encouraged by his conclusions.

The book is an excellent introduction to the problems of hermeneutics. While written primarily for seminarians and others who have some knowledge of church history and theological scholarship, the language and content are accessible to laity. Helpful definitions of theological terms and background information are included in the text. I recommend the book.

Linda Suderman is Minister of Education and Discipleship at the First United Methodist Church in Sanger, California.

**Passport to Servanthood.** By Earl R. Martin. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1988, 190 pp., \$7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Harley Wagler

This book depicts Thomas B. Maston, influential teacher in Southern Baptist circles who gained recognition primarily for his work in ethics.

The book describes Maston's youth in Tennessee, his conversion, marriage, calling, and eventual career in a Christian college. In 1922 he began a 41-year teaching ministry at the denomination's Southwestern Seminary.

Maston was marked by three characteristics. First was his emphasis on family. A most heartwarming aspect of the book is Maston's devotion to Essie Mae (or "Mommie"), and his consideration for Tom Mac, an older son who suffered brain damage at birth. For 60 years this wheelchair-bound son was an essential part of the Maston household.

Second, Maston was committed to cross-cultural mission. In his formative years he felt called to mission work abroad, but partly due to his family's situation, God called him to teach. Chalk became his tool for witness, and his teaching gifts took him to missionary conferences throughout the world long after his retirement.

Third is Maston's consistent lifestyle. An early admirer told him, "The greatest sermon you'll ever preach is the life you live." Many students were inspired by his life and teaching and consequently committed themselves to mission work. Maston is portrayed as a culturally sensitive person who easily established rapport with believers in the areas he visited.

The book's organizing metaphor is Robert Frost's poem, "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening." It highlights the complimentary themes of journey and domestic coziness. The title also emphasizes the notion of humility which was so admirably demonstrated by Maston.

The book is simply written; the author uses short sentences and his approach is highly anecdotal. Like Robert Frost's poetry, the work deals with the simple uncomplicated passions of life. Martin treats an era when the notion of missions was less subject to scholarly analysis than is the case today.

Harley Wagler, Slavic librarian at the University of Kansas, earlier served nine years with Eastern Mennonite Board in Eastern Europe.

## Editorial

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Tuesday evening, February 7, 1989, family, friends, and colleagues gathered at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kansas, to pay tribute to Edwin I. Weaver. He died on February 4 in his eighty-sixth year. Those assembled recalled with gratitude the various roles Ed Weaver had played in a career that took him and Irene, his wife, to India, Nigeria, Ghana, Botswana, Lesotho, and many other places.

On Wednesday afternoon, April 12, 1989, a group of friends and colleagues gathered at Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England, to present to Harold W. Turner a *festschrift* in recognition of his long career and distinguished contribution to the study of new religious movements and mission studies. Harold and Maude Turner left on April 18 for New Zealand, the homeland they had left thirty-five years ago.

It is fitting that we recognize the singular contributions of Ed Weaver and Harold Turner—each in his particular way. But we must not let the moment pass without recalling the way in which they—at a crucial moment—provided stimulation and reinforcement to each other.

The Weavers have recounted in *The Uyo Story* (1970) how they arrived in Nigeria in 1959 and landed in a situation for which they felt quite unprepared. They were impressed that the traditional mission approaches were totally out of tune with Southeastern Nigerian reality. Ed and Irene soon found themselves in deep but creative crisis.

Shortly before this, Harold Turner and his family had gone to a beach near Freetown, Sierra Leone. There he encountered a man praying on the beach. That meeting proved to be pivotal in the career of Harold Turner, setting him on a line of inquiry that has not ended yet.

The Weavers and Turners met in Nigeria not long after their respective crisis experiences. They quickly discovered they were both wrestling with the same phenomenon, albeit from two different angles.

It is not claiming too much to say that in both cases what began as a crisis of understanding led to a conversion of outlook. This change in orientation opened up new avenues of ministry.

The Turner-Weaver encounter with Africa came at a propitious moment. The times were seemingly out of joint.

The curtain was about to be drawn on European colonialism in Africa. Everything European smacked of colonialism, including much of the mission establishment. Ed Weaver struggled to find new ways of understanding the mission of the church in a post-colonial Africa. Intuitively, he sensed that the long-misunderstood African independent churches provided pointers. But in 1960 independency did not enjoy a good press.

By this time Harold Turner's curiosity was thoroughly aroused and he was being drawn into the scholarly study of this religious phenomenon. Soon afterward Turner moved from Fourah Bay College to the University of Nigeria at Nsukka; at the same time Weaver became increasingly involved with a wide spectrum of churches. With the help of colleagues, Weaver conducted several surveys of the actual religious situation in Southeastern Nigeria. At the university Turner and his colleagues analyzed and interpreted the data. To do this discerningly and honestly, they discovered, required new analytical tools which traditional religious studies did not provide.

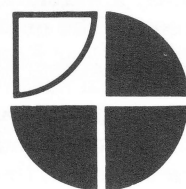
Both Ed Weaver and Harold Turner have had the ability to inspire and enlist others in the causes they espoused. They have created movement wherever they have gone. Their enthusiasms have been contagious and motivating. They saw visions of things bigger than any one individual or group could handle. They exemplified ecumenical spirit and action at its best.

Harold Turner and Ed Weaver found it possible to make common cause because they shared a passion for the mission of Christ in the world. They believed that faithfulness in mission required that we move forward, learning from the past, and persistently moving out to the frontiers of Christian witness.

One measure of the influence of an individual is the extent to which that influence has defined the task for those who follow. To an unusual degree Ed Weaver and Harold Turner have shaped the missiological agenda on which many of us are now at work, either directly or indirectly. The four articles which comprise this issue of *Mission Focus* are in continuity with concerns central to the Weaver-Turner inheritance.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

# MISSION FOCUS



## Understanding the Atonement

Suffering, Salvation and Mission

JOHN DRIVER

Human suffering in many parts of the two-thirds world has reached staggering proportions. Its causes are myriad. Some people want changes in the social system and some oppose them. Behind the reality of suffering is human greed and violence in some form. The harsh realities of human suffering may feel like an unmitigated curse. Yet both biblically and historically, suffering and salvation are intimately related. The nature of this relationship remains a mystery and is difficult to explain rationally. But faith recognizes that vicarious suffering is indeed salvific, and human experience ratifies it.

As Westerners, we are adamantly rationalistic in our attempts to understand reality. This partly accounts for the dominance of the Anselmic satisfaction theory in understanding the atonement during the past 800 years.<sup>1</sup> But wherever the church has suffered persecution as an oppressed minority rather than from a position of power, understanding atonement in terms of salvific, vicarious suffering has become not only plausible but a powerful aspect of its evangelistic witness.

Brothers and sisters in Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Nicaragua suffer untold pain as a result of a conflict which is not really theirs. They are the innocent victims of an ideological and economic power struggle of hemispheric and global dimensions. Recently, Seminario Anabautista Latinoamericano (SEMILLA) organized a seminar in six Central American countries on the theme of *Evangelization and Discipleship in Radical Perspective* for pastors and church leaders enrolled in their theological education program.<sup>2</sup> I asked seminar participants to identify the images that were most effective in communicating the meaning of the gospel, specifically the life and death of Jesus, in their Nicaraguan setting. The response was clear and unambiguous. They listed the following images: 1) reconciliation in which relationships with former enemies and with God are restored; 2) vicarious suffering as the way God restores us to fellowship through Christ's suffering as well as through that of his people; 3) witness-martyrdom in which authentic witness to God's way of salvation includes suffering for the sake of the kingdom.

### Understanding the biblical view

These images reflect three principal motifs which the New Testament uses to communicate the meaning of Jesus' life and death. But more than just figures to convey a rational understanding of the atonement, they picture the reality experienced by Jesus in his life and death and by his disciples in their experiences. Rather than imaging an abstract theology of salvation, they express the real life of the Messiah and the messianic community.

### Reconciliation motif

Ephesians 2 contains a mature Pauline statement on the meaning of atonement achieved through the life and death of Jesus. Hostilities have been overcome. Former enemies are reunited and reconciled to God through the work of Christ. However, the links between this two-dimensional reconciliation and the concrete life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are tenuous at best within the Christian church. Prevailing theories of atonement lead us to think that the work of Christ achieved a reconciliation outside the concrete plane of human relationships, either by a change in God's attitude or by satisfaction of some abstract moral law in the universe. Therefore, the concrete dimensions of reconciliation described in Ephesians 2 are seen as the spiritual, or indirect, consequences of the atonement and are not directly tied to the life and death of Jesus.

But if we can put ourselves in the context of the New Testament and listen to the testimony of the Christian church which continues to suffer persecution, we come to understand that vicarious suffering is indeed salvific. We will discover that the relationship between the life and death of the Messiah and messianic salvation is not as tenuous or remotely invisible as the Constantinian theories of Christendom have led us to imagine. In fact salvific, vicarious suffering of the Messiah is the epitome of God's saving strategy in the biblical story. It is the paradigm for the ongoing vicarious suffering of the messianic community.

### The temple-cleansing episode

The cleansing of the temple is an important event in the life of Jesus. The narrative is found in all four Gospels (Matt. 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:13-22). In Anabaptist circles the story generally invokes the question of just how nonresistant Jesus was. Simply to use the story to question nonresistance or to advocate active nonviolence is to miss the more fundamental

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implications of this narrative. In reality the narrative helps us understand the meaning of the life and death of Jesus as the New Testament community perceived it.

The belligerent animosity characterizing Jew-gentile relationships in the first century is well known. The most formidable barrier dividing the peoples of the Near East in the New Testament era was the wall of mutual hatred separating Jews from gentiles. Furthermore, first-century Jewish society was fragmented within itself. Social and economic pressures had marginalized large sectors of the population of Palestine. These sectors are referred to in a variety of ways in the New Testament—the poor, the little ones, publicans, and sinners.

The temple-cleansing narrative concretely depicts one way Jesus responded to these barriers. Matthew, Mark, and John refer specifically to "those who sold pigeons" as objects of Jesus' protest. Pigeons were the sacrifices of the poor, a fact which sets Jesus' action in perspective. Matthew mentions Jesus' ministry to the "blind and the lame" (21:14), Mark refers to "all the multitude" (11:18), and Luke notes "all the people" (19:48). These are all references to the outcast sector of Jewish society which Jesus came "to seek and to save."

Jesus' attitude toward Jewish-gentile hostility is also reflected in the temple-cleansing narrative. All three synoptic Gospels quote Jesus' appeal to Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11 in his protest against official abuses of the temple court. But only Mark calls attention to the prophetic vision of the temple as "a house of prayer for all nations" (11:17). It was the court of the gentiles, where outsiders could mingle with the people of Israel and approach their God, which official Judaism had profaned. Both Mark and Luke specifically mention the crucial nature of this event—crucial in that it provided the occasion for Jewish hierarchy to seek "a way to destroy him," and led to the cross. The way in which Jesus made himself vulnerable for both outcasts within Judaism and outsiders beyond Judaism comes to a climactic confrontation in the temple-cleansing narrative. This was predicted already in the résumé of Jesus' messianic message and mission found in Luke 4:16-30. Here, too, the attempt on Jesus' life was precipitated by his concern for outsiders. In this case Jesus referred to the prophetic preference for the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian (4:25-30).

Even though John sets the temple cleansing in a different context (2:13-22), it still points to Jesus' death (2:19-22). But that is not the entire message. In the context in which the synoptic Gospels set this story, John relates Jesus' encounter with the Greeks. For John, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem climaxes with this encounter. Jesus understands his death as culmination of life given in behalf of outsiders. This is the setting for Jesus' understanding of the salvific character of vicarious suffering: "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24).

The temple cleansing and the encounter with the Greeks are related not merely to show that the effects of Jesus' life and death will ultimately reach the lowest of the low in society to the ends of the earth, although this is true. The writers of the Gospels teach concretely in this narrative that Jesus' life lived in favor of the outcasts and the least of outsiders, in fact, led to the cross. To be Jesus' disciple is to be called to participate in the same kind of salvific suffering (John 12:23-26).

So we understand that the Pauline reference to reconciliation among enemies in Ephesians 2 is not a purely

spiritualized vision based simply on theological reflection of Jesus' death. Taking our cue from the temple-cleansing episode, we discover an essential relationship between the way Jesus lived and the way he died, between vicarious suffering on behalf of enemies and reconciliation, between innocent death and the secret of life.

### *The power of death motif*

Jesus, of course, is the supreme example of the life-giving power of death, but the motif runs throughout the biblical story. In Abraham the promise of life, blessing, and future stands in spite of Abraham's experience of the living death of childlessness (Frazier 1987:148). Abraham was, for all practical purposes, a dead man as he sought to be faithful (Rom. 4:19; Heb. 11:12, 17-19). His advanced age and childlessness were not mere barriers to God's salvific intention for all peoples. They are essential

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ingredients by which God's salvation comes through human weakness and death. The adversity which Abraham suffered is generally seen as a testing of his faith. While this may be true (Gen. 22:1), Abraham's hardships and the living death of childlessness culminating in the sacrifice of Isaac carry a deeper meaning. The suffering of death can be salvific in a deep and mysterious sense.

The story of Babel reminds us that resistance to death is a form of sinful rebellion. The people of Babel resisted the threat of scattering and anonymity by building a city and tower to defend themselves, trying to overcome death simply by asserting the power of life. In contrast, according to God's intention, the power of death is paradoxically overcome by passing through death buoyed up with the resources of faith. The death-accepting path taken by Abraham leads to life, while the death-defying defense of the Babelites proved to be self-defeating (Frazier 1987:149).

### *The suffering servant paradigm*

This pattern of salvation through death, noted in Abraham's experience, is even clearer in the suffering servant imagery of Isaiah (42:1-4; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12). The assumption of unmerited suffering and death is instrumental in God's salvific action which reaches to all. The suffering and death motif is much more prominent in the servant than in Abraham. And the causal connection between the vicarious suffering of the servant and the salvation of many is more specific. The justice for which the nations wait and the light for which those who walk in darkness long rises out of the vicarious suffering of one who "like a lamb is led to the slaughter" (Isa. 53:7).

But how can this free acceptance of vicarious death deliver from the bondage of sin? Here we confront a reality shrouded in mystery and characterized by life-giving power. "What the Servant did by way of deliverance is the precise reversal of what transpires on the deepest level of all destructive behaviour. The malignancy he turned inside out by walking freely into the jaws of death (Isa. 50:5-7; 53:7) is nothing other than our frantic, calamitous inclination to run in the other direction. His death-defeating death-acceptance targets our death-dealing death-resistance, much in the same fashion as Abraham" (Frazier 150).

Jesus gives the fullest expression to this reality. It is precisely through his affliction, vicarious and freely assumed, that Jesus mediates universal deliverance. In his death Jesus absorbed the evil designs of his enemies, supremely manifesting God's power to absorb evil. The cross becomes the ultimate symbol of God's saving power expressed in his love for enemies. This is the unanimous conviction of the New Testament writers. Jesus gave his life that all might be saved (Rom. 5:6-19; et al.). It is through his death that outsiders are brought near (Eph. 2:11-18). By his acceptance of death Jesus heals all those divisions which have proved so destructive to human existence on every level (Eph. 1:7-10; Col. 1:19-20).

This understanding, that the free acceptance of vicarious suffering and death is God's way to life, was hard to come by, even in the New Testament. Initially the followers of Jesus saw in his death the end of their hopes (Luke 24:20-21). Then, illumined by the Spirit of Christ, they began to see in their own suffering salvific resources akin to those experienced through Jesus' suffering (1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:7-12; 12:10). The salvific meaning of Jesus' suffering was joined in their experience to the powerful

witness of Christians' suffering for the cause of Christ (Rom. 12:11). Satan and his ultimate threat of death lost power when faced fearlessly and freely by Jesus on behalf of his enemies, and by his followers on behalf of their enemies.

Through Jesus, the early church understood that the salvation of the unjust comes only through the vicarious suffering of the just. "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit" (1 Pet. 3:18). While this vision is often spiritualized and the "justification" is understood in Roman forensic and fictitious terms, in this context Jesus' suffering as oppressed in behalf of oppressor is offered as a model for first-century Christians in response to their oppressors.

### *The witness-martyr motif*

This dimension of vicarious suffering and death as a way of responding salvifically to evildoers has remained in the consciousness of the Christian church. It seems to have taken the messianic community of the New Testament by surprise but finally established itself as a prominent motif for understanding the meaning of suffering and death. In fact, the church of the early centuries followed Jesus, the original witness-martyr, in becoming a community of witness-martyrs. Shortly after the middle of the second century Justin Martyr wrote, "The more we are persecuted, the more do others in ever increasing numbers embrace the faith and become worshippers of God through the name of Jesus. Just as when one cuts off the fruit-bearing branches of the vine, it grows again and other blossoming and fruitful branches spring forth, so it is with us Christians" (Martyr 110). And soon after the beginning of the third century Tertullian noted that "the blood of the Christians is seed" (Tertullian 13). From the New Testament period onward, "patientia"—the Latin term for that nonresistant endurance which could resist at all costs the pressures which could suck them into the whirlpool of violence and death-resistance—became a prominent characteristic of these early Christians.

### **The Constantinian shift**

With the Constantinian shift early in the fourth century came the demise of this biblical understanding of the salvific character of vicarious death in the church. In its place theories capable of abstraction rose to prominence. The gospel could now be communicated without suffering. And the salvific character of Jesus' suffering was relegated to the doctrinal memory of the church, represented only through the sacraments. Later in classical Protestantism salvation was achieved through faith. Apart from the minority movements of radical renewal, which arose from time to time in the church, Christ no longer needed to suffer in his members.

### **Movements of recovery**

#### *Czech Brethren*

A representative spokesman for these movements of radical renewal was Peter Chelcicky, a leader of the Czech Brethren in 15th-century Bohemia. He witnessed the unspeakable suffering of his people. Chelcicky was among those who survived a fratricidal war between nationalistic moderates and the Taborite radicals in which 12,000 Taborites perished in battle. The terrible injustices of the feudal system divided their society into three "estates"—

nobility, clergy, and commoners. With remarkable clarity and courage, Chelcicky denounced the injustices of this system which hung like a millstone around the neck of the common people. But, immersed in this severe test of suffering, he perceived that the salvation of the oppressors would come about only through the suffering of the oppressed (Brock 1957:65-66). Chelcicky intuitively perceived this vision of the salvific nature of vicarious suffering more from reading the New Testament in the context of persecution and suffering than from detached social analysis.

### *Sixteenth-century Anabaptists*

During the 16th century, Anabaptists also came through the crucible of suffering for the cause of the kingdom. This colored their understanding of Christ's atoning work. Although they did not begin by repudiating the Anselmian theory of the atonement, which was dominant in their time, they tended simply to neglect it. They emphasized the relationship of the atoning life and death of Jesus to the life and suffering of the disciple community living under the cross. "How then has Christ worked satisfaction for our sins? ... He, as the head of his church, has done enough; yet he will nevertheless day by day again do enough in his members and for them until the end of the world, just as he had done from the beginning (of the world) until his appearance" (Yoder 1973:115). From the earliest days of the movement in Zürich, Anabaptists held that "Christ must suffer still more in his members" (Williams 1957:84). The Anabaptists noted a continual chain of salvific suffering among God's people throughout salvation history: the suffering of the prophets, the suffering and death of Jesus, the suffering of the apostles, and the experiences of God's people who were faithful in suffering in every period, including their own.

### *Contemporary suffering in the two-thirds world*

The suffering of Christians in the two-thirds world of our time provides a clue for a more biblical understanding of the atoning life and death of Jesus, and can also help us to understand the salvific nature of vicarious suffering. But wherever mission has accompanied political, military, or economic conquest, from Constantine to the present, the sufferings of Christ and of Christians have been given other interpretations. Christ's suffering and death was deemed necessary in an abstract way quite independently of the historical reality of God's confrontation with evil in the person of Jesus. Human suffering is glossed over by assigning it an ahistorical "eternal" value. Therefore, Christians are urged to suffer patiently the injustices perpetrated against them in view of their final reward.

### **The power of suffering**

The reality of human suffering can, of course, be interpreted in a variety of ways (Boff 1986:117-135). But here we are concretely concerned with innocent and vicarious suffering which has proven to be salvific in the history of God's people. The response to suffering and death has often been rebellious resistance, which in the end simply succumbs to the enemy. Other times persons accepted suffering which they could not avoid with bitter resignation. Here again, the cross of human suffering triumphs over the sufferers, and no salvation results from it.

There is another alternative, however. Leonardo Boff, the Brazilian Franciscan, insists that suffering and death freely assumed on behalf of oppressors can be truly salvific

(Boff 130-131). Even though the cross cannot be avoided, it will not have the last word. It is possible to accept suffering and death as an expression of love toward those who inflict violence. The capacity to act in a conciliatory way toward those bent on destroying fellowship introduces a saving element into human relationships. This corresponds to the deep biblical conviction that love and forgiveness alone can reestablish broken relationships. To forgive and to assume freely the cross of suffering and death which is forced upon us is to redirect history itself toward that ultimate reconciliation which will finally include even God's enemies.

The life and death of Jesus were truly liberating. He did not come simply to seek death, but to "seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness." But when the cross of suffering and death overtook him he assumed them freely because of his absolute obedience to the will of his Father. In his death Jesus offered his life to those who sought to destroy him, opening up to them the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation. Therefore the life of Jesus in its entirety, but especially his death, carries salvific meaning and power.

In light of this, it becomes clear that authentic evangelization owes more to the innocent and vicarious suffering of God's people for the cause of his kingdom than to other strategies which would appear to insure church growth. We should recognize the potential for evangelization in the suffering of God's people rather than simply dismissing it as a tragedy.

In the New Testament the potential of suffering for the witness of the church was clear. There is a connection between the willingness of Christians to accept death and the innate attractiveness of the faith. The commission to see Jerusalem as the point of departure for messianic mission to all the world was not based on mere geographic or strategic considerations. This was the place where prophets were stoned (Luke 13:33-34; 18:31-34). Jerusalem was the place where the cross of salvific suffering and death was freely chosen by Jesus and the beginning point for all who continue the task of evangelization (Frazier 152-153). Missionaries not only report on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem; they must join him in that journey and commit themselves to the way of salvific suffering and death.

Just as in the case of Jesus, the way in which Christians suffer and die is the most contagious aspect of what being a disciple of Jesus means. It is a most powerful form of witness. The evangelizing mission of the church will be less than Christlike if it does not include the free embrace of vicarious suffering and death. To understand the atonement merely in the purely rational terms of the traditional Christian church theories is to misunderstand the meaning of the life and death of Jesus. In their suffering witness to the righteousness which characterizes the messianic kingdom, and in their free acceptance of suffering and even death in behalf of their oppressors, Christians will be best able to understand and to communicate the saving power of the gospel.

The innocent and vicarious suffering and death of Christians in our time is not an unmitigated tragedy, even though it results from crimes perpetrated against humanity which should be energetically denounced. To be sure, human suffering is not to be sought for its own sake; but when it is assumed freely in the cause of Christ, in the cause of God's righteous kingdom, it takes on salvific dimensions. In an era in which there are more martyr



deaths occurring than ever before in Christian history, the meaning and attraction of Christ's atoning life and death may be able to grip us anew with power for witness.

## Notes

1. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) developed his objective or satisfaction theory of the atonement in his book *Cur Deus Homo?* According to Anselm the essential reason for the death of Christ was to take away the barrier between God and humankind. Since this barrier was not within humans but in God or the moral order, it was an *objective* reality. Christ's death was the only way to *satisfy* God's demand for justice. This theory is analyzed in John Driver, *Understanding the Atonement for the Mission of the Church*, Herald Press, 1986: 50-64.

2. In the seminar we intentionally attempted to peel away the encrusted layers of tradition and to recover a more biblical understanding of concepts such as gospel, salvation, conversion, atonement, discipleship, etc.

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## A Review Essay

# Christology in Round-Table Discussion

WILLARD M. SWARTLEY

- Borg, Marcus. *Jesus, A New Vision: Spirit, Culture and the Life of Discipleship*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987, 216 pp., \$16.95 (pb).
- Horsley, Richard A. *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987, 355 pp., \$27.95.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Understanding Jesus: Who Jesus Christ Is and Why He Matters*. Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1987, 184 pp., \$5.95.
- Webster, Douglas. *A Passion for Christ: An Evangelical Christology*. Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1987, 221 pp., \$8.95.
- Stott, John R. *The Cross of Christ*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986, 383 pp., \$14.95.
- Driver, John. *Understanding the Atonement for the Mission of the Church*. Scottdale and Kitchener: Herald Press, 1986, 286 pp., \$19.95 (pb).
- Finger, Thomas N. *Christian Theology: An Eschatological Approach, Vol. I*. Scottdale and Kitchener: Herald Press, 1985, 367 pp., \$21.95.
- Kraus, C. Norman. *Jesus Christ Our Lord: Christology from a Disciple's Perspective*. Scottdale and Kitchener: Herald Press, 1987, 267 pp., \$19.95 (pb).
- Boff, Leonardo. *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology for Our Time*, trans. Patrick Hughes. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1978, 323 pp., \$14.95 (pb).
- Sobrinho, Jon. *Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach*, trans. John Drury. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1978, 432 pp., \$14.95 (pb).

These books represent four types of studies in Christology. New Testament professors Borg and Horsley focus on the historical Jesus. Borg's portrait arises primarily from the Gospels' witness; Horsley's is informed both by the Gospels and study of the sociopolitical and economic world

of Jesus. McGrath, Webster, and Stott represent Protestant evangelical perspectives. Driver, Finger, and Kraus accent in different ways emphases from the Anabaptist theological tradition (Driver and Stott limit their studies to the work of Christ, a vital part of Christology). Boff and Sobrinho, both Roman Catholic theologians, develop Christologies consonant with Latin-American Liberation Theology and its struggle for justice.

## Recovering Jesus in the Gospels

Borg sets forth his view of Jesus and early Christianity as an alternative option to the prevailing popular and mainline scholarly views of Jesus. The popular image presents Jesus as the divinely begotten Son of God who came into the world to die for sinners and make claims about his own deity. The scholarly consensus, seeking to recover the *historical* Jesus, accents Jesus' eschatological proclamation: God's kingdom is dawning and the eschatological crisis will come within this generation. Borg regards these portraits to be effective ways of shielding Jesus from human and cultural experience; they distort Jesus' person and mission. Rather, Jesus was Leader of a Spirit-empowered discipleship that functioned critically within dominant culture.

Part I of Borg's book is devoted to "Jesus and Spirit"; Part II, to "Jesus and Culture." Borg's "third way" sees Jesus first of all within the context of the "Spirit-Filled Heart of Judaism" and views Jesus and his mission as empowered by his Spirit-filled relation to God. Jesus was first and foremost a mediator of the world of Spirit-power into the material world. His exorcisms and miracles are to be seen in that context. The key to his Spirit-empowered

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ministry was his vital and intimate communion with his divine Abba (Imma). Borg holds that it is impossible for us as moderns to grasp Jesus and his mission rightly until we critically come to terms with our culture which has effectively excluded the reality of the realm of spirit. Jesus knew that Spirit was ultimate reality, and he ministered on that basis, filled with deep compassion for those possessed by demons and suffering from illness. Only against this portrait of Spirit-power and intense compassion can we rightly glimpse the historical Jesus, the one whom his followers later described with a rich variety of Christological titles (Borg 1987:50).

In Part II Borg develops Jesus' portrait as sage, founder of a revitalization movement and prophet. As *sage* (wisdom teacher), he taught "a way or path, specifically, a way of transformation" (97). In many pithy images, proverbs, and parables Jesus reveals God as compassionate and gracious. In Jesus God welcomes and eats with sinners, loves the prodigal from afar, and is tender, life-giving—"wombish." Jesus shows to humans the options of the broad and narrow way. The broad way was the way of conventional wisdom—a way of self-preservation through self-securing religious traditions and wealth; the narrow way was a way of "a new heart . . . centering in the Spirit (God) . . . and the way of death." This death means both dying to self and to "the world as the center of gravity and security." As sage, Jesus stood "in the tradition of subversive wisdom. . . . Standing in the charismatic stream of his own tradition, Jesus called his hearers to a life grounded in Spirit rather than one grounded in culture" (115-16).

Jesus came not to found Christianity but to renew Israel. To do this he "created a sectarian revitalization or renewal movement within Israel" (125). Jesus' "renewal movement" was essentially charismatic and culturally critical. By incorporating outcasts, women, and the poor, the movement reflected the compassion of God. Celebrative in its common meals, marked by rejoicing and fellowship free from anxiety, it was the first-century peace party showing forth the *imago Dei*.

As *prophet*, Jesus went to Jerusalem at Passover, when many pilgrims assembled, to offer Israel one last call to repentance. Jesus criticized the politics of separatistic holiness and offered instead God's politics of compassion. He criticized purity laws and set forth the proper interpretation of the law which the religious leaders felt as a threat. His last two prophetic acts, the royal entry into Jerusalem—on a donkey symbolizing peace—and the cleansing of the temple, triggered his own way of faithfulness to death. Jesus "was killed because he sought, in the name and power of the Spirit, the transformation of his own culture." His alternative consciousness "collided with the dominant consciousness of his culture" (183). Jesus' resurrection was entry into a new mode of being, participating in God's own power and authority—at God's right hand.

Borg ends by noting that Jesus' ministry in the power of the Spirit is "both exciting and oddly disconcerting" for us today who often fail to grasp that reality, and thus confuse discipleship "with dogmatism or doctrinal orthodoxy. . . . But the vision of Jesus as a person of the Spirit, deeply involved in the historical crisis of his own time, can shape the church's discipleship today. For us, as for the world in which he lived, he can be the light in our darkness" (200).

Borg's portrait of Jesus comes as a fresh, well-written,

and welcomed contribution. It scores high, not because Borg has found a "new historical Jesus" by modern historical critical methods, but because Borg has read the Gospels well and has not allowed modern worldviews to shield his perceptions. However, some elements in the popular and scholarly portraits might well be incorporated into Borg's portrait: Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom as God's eschatological call to repentance and transformation, and Jesus' own consciousness of his impending rejection and death, as prophet, martyr, servant, and Savior.

Horsley, enamored with the recent scholarly thesis that the Zealot party did not begin until A.D. 66, seeks to depict Jesus' profile within his contemporary economic and political world. Galilee was marked by peasant protests and resistance efforts against political-economic oppression (i.e., double taxation), but it was not a hotbed of revolution. Using Dom Helder Camera's three-stages to describe the situation that leads to revolution, Horsley adds a fourth, put into second place: thus, injustice, resistance, repression, and revolution. Jesus' ministry occurred in this cycle at the interconnection of injustice and resistance. His proclamation of the kingdom, in word (calling for egalitarian and non-exploitive relations) and deed (table fellowship with the marginalized, healings, exorcisms, forgiveness of sins) had economic and political impact. Jesus' teachings called for a new sociology of relationships: forgiving debts, loving enemies, caring for each other, and living carefree. His message was addressed to the local situation. In Jerusalem he regarded the temple as an instrument of Roman subjugation, and thus his prophetic act against it; the tribute controversy gives neither a basis for obedience or disobedience to Rome. While never addressing directly the issue of violence, he gave no basis for its use. But neither can Jesus be classified as a pacifist. He called for a social transformation of relationships, at the economic and political level, that would mitigate the need for a violent revolution.

Horsley does not address the atoning significance of Jesus' life and death, nor the divine dimension of Jesus' identity. His view of pacifism appears constricted, for indeed his portrait of Jesus is one of peace-making. The strength of his work lies in its presentation of Jesus as one who sought in concrete ways, in word and deed, to break the spiral of violence. As such it makes an important contribution to the mission of the church in today's global village.

### Christology in evangelical accent

McGrath, a lecturer in doctrine and ethics at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, writes brilliantly and lucidly. He treats most all the standard Christological issues in very readable style and generally avoids oversimplification—a real gift and an excellent book for the beginner in Christology. After three chapters establishing the credibility of Christian claims about Jesus and the resurrection, McGrath devotes four chapters each to the person of Jesus Christ and the work of Jesus Christ. While at the beginning (McGrath 1987:27) he says that for his purposes it does not matter whether one begins with function or identity, his latter chapters clearly show his position that function, or what Jesus did, simply unfolds or discloses what Jesus always was and continues to be, both God and man.

McGrath uses "man/men" frequently, a point that makes for flowing script, but which causes readers used to inclusive language to stumble. His views respect scholarly

concerns and frequently reflect them, e.g., he distinguishes between humans *knowing* of Jesus' divine nature, which originates from the resurrection (Rom 1:3-4), and Jesus' own *being*, which was always marked by divine nature (the confessional position of Phil. 2, Heb. 1, John 1). McGrath discusses briefly seven images which illumine the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection for believers: ransom, redemption, justification, salvation, reconciliation, adoption, and forgiveness (cf. here Driver's more extensive contribution). McGrath devotes one chapter each to God's love, God's victory, and God's forgiveness, connecting these respectively with the moral, Christus Victor, and satisfaction theories. But, wisely, he does not limit these emphases to these theories. McGrath's two major weaknesses are that he does not do justice to either the topic of evil, in either personified form or its socio-structural expressions, nor to discipleship as inherently flowing out of Jesus' person and work.

Webster, who teaches theology and ethics at Ontario Theological Seminary, is to be commended for his strong connection between Christology and discipleship. Like McGrath, through stories he shows the significance of Christ's work for human transformation. Three emphases permeate Webster's work: the need to hold the Scripture principle over the modernity principle; the need to present the person and work of Christ *as it is presented in Scripture*; and the need to appropriate Christ's work in our experience for conversion and human transformation. In marked contrast to Kraus and Sobrino, he regards the Christological beliefs of Jesus, the early church, and classical Christianity (the "orthodoxy" of the early church through the Reformers!) to be, as it were, a seamless robe. Against Sobrino's treatment of the creeds in doxological categories, Webster refuses the separation of doxological language from the historical and ontological. These are modernity's games, but they are alien to the biblical thought which birthed Christology.

Webster's case for a biblically based Christology frequently critiques modern "thinking from below" formulations (Segundo, Sobrino, and Kung). These views, he argues, are prisoners of a modern consciousness marked by a developmental view of the self, a relativism of all claims to uniqueness, and an absolutizing of our contemporary human experience (40-44). Christology, rather, must begin with Jesus' own beliefs about himself, as witnessed in the Gospels, and this includes Jesus' divine and human nature. As Jesus' life unfolded, culminating in his death and resurrection, Jesus disclosed himself to be what he essentially was, is, and continues to be. The historical manifests the theological; essence precedes function. The divine and human were and are always fully present in Jesus. Both docetism and ebionism must be refused. Jesus' humanity models a passionate discipleship for believers, and Jesus' divinity enables it. While Webster's emphasis on discipleship has some socio-structural dimensions, it lacks any significant framing by ecclesiology and mission, though the later is implicit, if not explicit.

Stott's major work, well-written with strong evangelical accent, consists of four parts with thirteen chapters. It begins by accenting the centrality of the cross, the need for *Christ* to die, and the meaning of that death when one looks below the surface. Part II treats three topics: forgiveness, satisfaction for sin, and the self-substitution of God. These are "The Heart of the Cross." Understanding satisfaction and substitution adequately and properly are all-important to Stott's work. He affirms Anselm's basic

contribution that only a God-man could satisfy, for "no-one *can* do it except one who is truly God, and no-one *ought* to do it except one who is truly man" (119). But he criticizes Anselm's portrayal of God as feudal overlord whose offended honor must be satisfied. He rejects every notion of satisfying *something* (law, justice, honor, or moral order) or *someone* (the devil). Rather, God satisfies his own self, in his complete moral character; God does not bow to some external norm or power outside his own character.

Further, one attribute (justice or wrath) is not satisfied at the expense of another (love). Hence Jesus is neither a third party volunteer or punished victim. God and Jesus are one in atonement: "Divine love triumphed over divine wrath by divine self-sacrifice" (159). Refusing interpretations of "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" which speak of God's absence, *feeling* forsaken, or the *triumph* of a dying rabbi reciting Psalm 22 which climaxes in victory, Stott argues for a real forsakenness which must be held in paradoxical tension with "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." His chapter on the substitution principle is the most convincing defense I've read. But it is so strong that his plea for Jesus as representative, which he later treats briefly to provide a Christological basis for a discipleship of self-denial and self-affirmation, (276) appears contrived.

Part III, "The Achievement of the Cross," takes up in three chapters "The Salvation of Sinners," "The Revelation of God," and "The Conquest of Evil." He views salvation broadly. The New Testament images of propitiation (which he defends against Dodd's case for expiation), redemption, justification, and reconciliation describe in complementary ways God's salvific act in Jesus Christ. He has a helpful section on evangelical-Roman Catholic differences on "justification" (187-88). He grants that each of the three main atonement theories is biblical and says that to some extent they can be harmonized. Each is directed toward a different person: "In the 'objective' view God satisfies himself, in the 'subjective' he inspires us, and in the 'classic' he overcomes the devil." He then notes P. T. Forsyth's reference to these as "The Threefold Cord": "the 'satisfactionary', 'regenerative' and 'triumphant' aspects of the work of Christ" (230).

In Part IV, "Living Under the Cross," Stott discusses the relation of Christ's work to worship, especially baptism and the eucharist; the new self-understanding and self-giving that marks the redeemed person, especially in both self-denial and self-affirmation; the meaning of the cross for "loving our enemies"; and the reality of "suffering and glory" that characterizes Christian faith and hope. He uses Romans 12-13 to order his discussion of the Christian's response to evil: evil is to be hated, not to be repaid, to be overcome, and to be punished. God's work in Christ on the cross shows how evil is both punished and overcome at the same time. His distinctions between divine and human agency as well as between church and state are fuzzy. He holds that differentiation between the latter is not Paul's point, but that Christians must function in two roles, personal and official. As police, they may use force; as private citizens, they may not.

While Stott's work is exemplary in clarity and precision, his treatment would be more faithful to the biblical balance of emphasis if his chapter on "The Conquest of Evil" would be given key position, receiving the care he gives to the principle of self-substitution. For the latter he undertakes an extensive study in Old Testament sacrifice



and Passover practices, but for the theme of divine victory, so pervasive in Scripture, no Old Testament background is given. Such a study would require a careful examination of divine and human agency in God's combat of evil. This in turn would shed light on his effort to appropriate the meaning of the cross to love of enemies and illumine further the images of justification and reconciliation. It would also shift his emphasis in two other important directions: the cross would of necessity be viewed together with Jesus' life, on the one side, and the resurrection, on the other; the cross would also have communal and sociopolitical dimensions, emphases virtually absent in the substitution, satisfaction, and forgiveness sections which form the core of his book. This fundamental weakness is a telling deficiency of the traditional Protestant and especially evangelical treatment of the work of Christ. When the victory of Christ over evil is given primary place, then Jesus' death and resurrection can be seen as a unity with his life, a point sorely deficient in Stott's work. Despite the book's brilliance, the above deficiencies register major questions about its theological adequacy. Can Stott's emphases be integrated with those of Borg, Kraus, and Sobrino? Do we need to decide between them, or can they harmonize in a symphony to him exalted at God's right hand?

### Christology from Anabaptist-Mennonite perspectives

The genius of Driver's study is its quite comprehensive description of the many New Testament images used to explicate the meaning of the atonement. Pluralism of images is, in fact, the key to understanding the atonement (244). Chapters 3–12 each deal with major groups of images, with "conflict-victory-liberation" rightly receiving first position. His chapter on "archetypal images" is important for connecting atonement to discipleship. His treatment of vicarious suffering (chapter 4) and sacrifice (chapter 7) merits comparison with Stott's satisfaction and self-substitution chapters. The emphases are quite different (space does not allow analysis here). Driver's study also excels in showing the cosmic redemptive significance of Jesus' work as well as the ecclesiological and missional implications of atonement. The book needs a companion: the images of Jesus' person and identity, and their ecclesiological and missional significance.

Finger's work is important because it briefly, but cogently, makes four contributions largely lacking in the rest: it gives the fairest analysis of historical views of the atonement; it situates Jesus within Israel's history and hopes; it takes account of evil in adequate dimensions—sin, Satan, demons, and the powers; and in these contexts it views Jesus' life, death, and resurrection as an indivisible whole. We must await his soon-appearing volume II to see if and how he connects this to ecclesial discipleship and mission.

Kraus's study has primarily a twofold focus: (1) a critical analysis of Christology in historical perspective in which Anabaptist theological emphases take their place alongside other historical contributions, and (2) its effort to make Christology culturally responsive, especially to the human shame phenomenon to which he was sensitized through his seven years of teaching in Japan. Through the interaction of these emphases, his work breathes a tone of vindicating a combined radical reformation and modern historical perspective against the "orthodoxy" of classical Christianity, which he holds to have deviated from the biblical emphases. Hence the ontological God-man

agenda (Kraus 1987:46-48), propitiation (215), and penal satisfaction (225) become scapegoats sent away from the good Christology which Kraus proposes.

In contrast to Webster, Kraus frequently drives a wedge between biblical views on Christology and later Christian emphases, implying that the second–fourth-century debates over Christ's nature were unhelpful, possibly heretical, departures from biblical emphases. In order to get free of the metaphysical, rationalist ontological and mystical, subjective existentialist modes of Christological meaning (46-48, 116), Kraus opts for "a historical approach to Christology," (57) which he combines with the social psychological model of personal identity and relationships (114). This "thinking from below" utilizes historical analogy purged of empiricism, and links thought to life relationships, thus binding Christology to ethics.

Kraus's formulations, as well as Sobrino's and Boff's, are open to the same criticisms leveled against the "American biblical theology" emphases in the sixties. How can history, open and accessible to everyone, function as a cradle in which the unique, once-for-all claims of biblical faith may securely lay? How can history *per se* and the analogical model of human relationships thus disclose the unique divine nature of Jesus? Kraus never adequately resolves this problem. His choice to put his excursus on the virgin birth in the chapter on Jesus' humanity, rather than in the one on Jesus' divine sonship, misses an opportunity to work on this agenda. Kraus seems to be influenced by Pannenberg, who shows his Achilles' heel on this point in seeking to explicate particularist claims within a methodology of universal access. Some emphasis on "revelation through word," in all its particular offense, begs to be heard. Further, rather than slice the pie between rational ontological and relational historical, Kraus's contribution would be stronger had he chosen a confessional approach which embraces event and word, the rational and the relational, the historical and the ontological, and even the metaphysical and the mystical. A discipleship Christology need not shy away from any of these modes of meaning.

Kraus's most helpful contributions lay in four areas: his attempt to situate Jesus' ministry in relation to Israel's hopes for a warrior-martyr model, his view of the relation between kingdom-rule and *agape*-love, his treatment of atonement within solidarity and representation (which embraces the substitution and vicarious) categories, and his insights on the role of shame in understanding atonement. On the first point, however, he emphasizes discontinuity: Jesus rejected the warrior-martyr model. Here Kraus missed a theological trophy, for it is essential also to see how Jesus claimed that tradition in his battle against evil, and transformed it by his rule of *agape*, a point Kraus notes. Approaching Finger's emphasis, Kraus treats quite well the topic of evil, and in more that just human categories (chapter 8 and 182-186). Future writing, teaching, and preaching on the atonement should benefit greatly from Kraus's original work on showing how shame functions in relation to atonement. Here Kraus's work is truly cross-cultural. His eastern cultural learning enables him to hear the Scripture on its own eastern cultural terms! The theme deserves its own monograph. His citing of Hebrews 12:2, "despising the shame," (222) merits extended exegesis, for the phrase hardly captures the original meaning (see New English Bible). *Shame* is not the object of *despising*, for *shame* is in the second inflection, i.e., "cross of shame." His "opening of this door" needs the wider contributions of cultural anthropology, and

especially Mary Douglass's studies on taboo, danger, and purity. A study of the Psalms would certainly illumine our understanding of shame and atonement, for they often speak of God's vindication of one from shame. Vindication from shame is a major theme in Psalms 31 and 69 (implicitly in 22), and these have shaped the Gospels' account of Jesus' death. Kraus's work can be thus further illumined by connecting it to the common New Testament scholarly view that Jesus' death and resurrection are to be understood via the rejection-vindication motif applied to God's Son as the suffering righteous one and faithful servant of justice.

### Christology in the struggle for justice

Boff, a Brazilian Franciscan, and Sobrino, an El Salvadoran Jesuit (originally Spanish editions, 1972 and 1976 respectively), seek to formulate understandings of Christology that connect with the contemporary struggle of Latin-American Christianity to attain justice in political and economic arenas. Hence, their focus is upon the historical and conflictual dimensions of Jesus' life. Since these two contributions are quite similar (except for Boff's preliminary lengthy survey of New Testament scholarship), space permits treatment of only one (Sobrino's is the more theologically incisive and comprehensive).

Sobrino states at the outset that his Christology is ecclesial, historical, and trinitarian (Sobrino 1978:xx). Ecclesial describes the context which empowers his Christological reflection, i.e. "the life and praxis of many ecclesial communities in Latin America" (see *Religious Studies Review* 14:3 (1988), 215-16). Historical describes the starting point and focus of Sobrino's Christology, i.e. the historical Jesus of Nazareth whose work and identity is disclosed in his service to the kingdom of God and his intimate, empowering relationship to God as his Father. That Jesus chose to speak of God as Father, and not Lord, is a choice for love rather than power (166). Trinitarian describes the interrelationship of God, Jesus, and Spirit in the Christological significance of Jesus. The kingdom is God's which Jesus proclaimed; he did not proclaim himself. God is greater than Jesus; the two are one as Father-Son. The resurrection, which makes the cross significant, is the work of the Father in vindication of the faithful obedience of the Son. The Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, given to Jesus' followers to enable them to live as radical disciples in the Spirit of Jesus. Jesus' life is an intrinsic part of his death and resurrection.

Sobrino provides methodological clarity by his comparative analysis of the Christologies of Rahner, Pannenberg, Moltmann, and Latin-American emphases on a five-point grid: the theological milieu of the author, attitude toward the Enlightenment, type of hermeneutics employed, how the basic metaphysical quandary is posed, and the density of the author's Christological concentration (18-37). Lacking space to show these comparisons, I will focus rather on basic comparisons between Sobrino's Christology and the evangelical Christologies reviewed above (hereafter EC). For EC the metaphysical quandary focuses on either the ontological level of how the divine and human are both fully present in Jesus or how the holy love and wrath of God endures and acts in the face of human sin. For Sobrino the basic quandary is really historical, how two fundamental and contradictory experiences coexist: the need and hope for liberation and the impossibility of achieving it amid injustice and oppression. For both sets of quandaries Jesus (as God-man for EC) provides the

answer. On "density" it is striking to see how for EC the satisfaction and substitutionary emphases occupy center space, but are of marginal interest for Sobrino. They tend to disconnect Jesus from human experience in history and thus undermine the core Christological significance of Jesus, according to Sobrino. They obscure the all-important fact that Jesus' death was the result of his life lived in the service of God's kingdom justice. In terms of canonical narrative density, Sobrino draws heavily from the Synoptics; the EC draw more evenly from the entire New Testament canon (though Stott barely connects atonement to Jesus' public ministry). As Sobrino puts it, the classic model focuses on how "the eternal Son becomes a human nature"; but Sobrino's view, appealing to the Synoptics in the context of God's preparatory liberating work in Israel, focuses on how "the human being, Jesus of Nazareth, becomes the Son of God in and through his concrete history" (338). Further, Jesus' compassion for the poor and oppressed discloses the locale which mediates God in the person of Jesus; in this way Jesus' life anticipates his sin-bearing on the cross and the shape of discipleship praxis.

Sobrino explicates the significance of Jesus' death on the cross under fourteen cogent theses (184-234). Rejecting all statements about the cross that remove God from the suffering of Jesus, Sobrino argues that our theology of the cross must be historical; it must come to terms with Jesus' God-forsakenness on the cross which paradoxically must affirm that "on the cross of Jesus God himself is crucified," as Father suffering the death of the Son and taking upon himself all the pain and suffering of history (224); that Christian faith originates "in the resurrection of the crucified one" and that it is the scandal of "the cross that makes Jesus' resurrection *Christian*" (184, 234). Sobrino quotes Moltmann to explicate Jesus' God-forsakenness, but here his own statements waffle between actual forsakenness and "feeling" or "apparent" forsakenness. With Moltmann he considers this abandonment to be a decisive feature of *Christian* theology, but his discussion is unfinished and puzzling. His emphasis on the point that Jesus thus "dies in total *discontinuity* with his life and his cause" (218)—and this differentiates his death from that of other religious and political martyrs—puts a strain upon his pervading emphasis on continuity between Jesus' life and death. By the criterion of consistency, something appears awry.

The resurrection, says Sobrino, is "the event that reveals God" (240). Its essential significance is "the triumph of justice." It declares who will be victorious, the oppressor, or the oppressed (244). From this arises the mission of the church: the *historical* significance of the resurrection is not that it happened in history, but that "it *founds* history that can and ought to be lived out ... opening up an eschatological future" (253). The resurrection also vindicates the life of Jesus, set forth now as the Spirit of our discipleship.

Sobrino's work is to be applauded for its comprehensive scope, its theological framework for Christology, and its linkage between Christology and discipleship. His refusal to pit personal conversion against structural change, and vice versa (121), as well as his insights on the relation between love and power (136) are commendable. His major deficiency is that he continues too much a child of the Enlightenment, in what he calls its first phase, which he holds to be accountable for sidelining the real Christological issues by its rationalist metaphysical agenda. His

treatment of Satan (97), discernment (129-30), and resurrection appearances as apparitions (112) indicate that he continues the very rationalist problem from which he seeks to liberate Christology. While Sobrino positions his Christological contribution as a response to the challenge of the Enlightenment's second stage, i.e., Marx's epistemological revolution (34), his work, potent as it is, begs for an empowerment that comes from reclaiming discarded notions by the Enlightenment's first stage (see Borg above).

### Critical reflections

Of first notice is that none of these works oriented their studies of Christology to the titles of Jesus, as has been done by major New Testament studies (Hahn, Cullmann, Fuller). This is a welcomed shift, but many valuable insights would have been gained by paying more attention to the titles of Jesus (McGrath and Kraus are the strongest here). Second, none of these writers utilized the important insights of René Girard on violence and sacrifice. My hunch is that here lies a meeting point for Stott and Kraus. In the scapegoat sacrifice, substitution, satisfaction, and vindication from shame—even violence—may be able to dwell together in and by the atonement.

In light of the round-table discussion itself, four interconnections emerge as crucial to Christology, the first three on the horizontal plane and the fourth on the vertical. The connection between God's salvific work in Israel (Old Testament) and Jesus is crucial, but is virtually nonexistent in all the above, except Kraus's and Sobrino's minimally and Finger's more substantially. The twofold

connection between Jesus' life and his death *and* his death and resurrection is also crucial; all three components must be held in inter-illuminating relationship. Sobrino, Finger, and Kraus show this point quite well. Third, the connection between Jesus and the church as the community of discipleship and mission is similarly crucial. While most all these writers make the atonement-discipleship connection to varying extent, only Driver and Webster draw clear and strong lines between Jesus' work and the mission of the church.

The last connection, the vertical one, is between the historical and the transcendent, the human and divine. While Sobrino and Kraus make this connection from the side of functional, historical Christology, they put on discount the classical ontological task. But does not the functional, when such entails uniqueness as they so claim, also imply the necessity of addressing fully and squarely this interconnection at the ontological level (John's Gospel can guide us in that task). Until this is done, one's view of God, evil, and human transformation in both the personal and social dimensions is likely to remain captive, implicitly if not explicitly, to presuppositions of the Enlightenment that limit faith's possibilities, both in the church's understanding of Jesus and in the God-Jesus-Spirit's empowerment of the church. This in turn impedes the church's mission. This criticism exposes modernity's nakedness, triggering a shame for which we need atoning, covering from above.

## A Review Essay

# The New Pluralism and Missions

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Costa, Ruy O., ed.

1988 *One Faith, Many Cultures: Inculturation, Indigenization, and Contextualization* (Boston Theological Institute Annual, Volume 2). Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books.

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1988 *The Dialogical Imperative: A Christian Reflection on Interfaith Encounter* (Faith Meets Faith Series). Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books.

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### Introduction

The idea that all religions, including Christianity, are contextual and relative has been around for a long time—at least since the time of Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923). And already in the 1930s the Hocking Report suggested that instead of missionizing we should join the other religions in dialogue to move human spirituality forward. But since the late 1970s a new claim that religious "pluralism" is not only legitimate but even necessary has been put forward as an implication of the mission and message of Jesus himself.

What is the relation between the particular, historical revelation that has come in Jesus of Nazareth and the universal, mystical revelation that the apostles John and Paul seem to acknowledge? Both Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions tended to resolve the question by the Johannine formula of the universal *Logos* which was embodied in Jesus Christ. This formula makes Jesus the decisive normative disclosure of a universal "light" which has shone in all of creation.

Orthodoxy, especially Protestant orthodoxy, spoke of the universal revelation as "natural" and as "common grace," which is not in itself salvific. It insisted that explicit



knowledge of and response to the historical disclosure in Jesus of Nazareth is necessary for salvation, therefore the missionary imperative.

Revisionists of many kinds spoke of the universality of God's love as revealed in Christ and allowed for the possibility of salvation outside of Christianity. Nevertheless, the agent of such salvation remains "the Christ," and the revelation which comes in Jesus remains normative for assessing the salvific situation. Norman Pittenger's emphasis upon Jesus' revelation of God's love as the very heart of creation itself, and creation as a process moving toward the incarnation of this love, is an example.

In the late 1950s and early 60s Karl Rahner introduced the idea that there are "anonymous Christians" outside Christianity, and Raimundo Panikkar wrote *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (1964). Both these Roman Catholic theologians suggested that there is salvific revelation outside the realm of the Christian church. They rejected the "exclusivism" of the traditional position that "outside the church is no salvation," but they left Jesus Christ at the center. But when Panikkar revised his book (1981) he rejected his earlier "inclusive" stance in favor of "pluralism." As he puts it in his chapter in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, "neither exclusivism nor inclusivism represents the proper attitude to this third moment. I am talking about *pluralism*" (Hick & Knitter 1987:103).

The new claims question the *centrality and normativity* of Jesus under the rubric of "theocentrism" rather than "christocentrism." Where Visser't Hooft strongly affirmed Christ's unique significance as Savior of all humankind in his book *No Other Name* (1963), Paul Knitter places a question mark after the same title, *No Other Name?* (1985).

For their own individual reasons people like John Hick, Paul Knitter, Tom Driver, and Rosemary Reuther no longer find Tillich's and Rahner's theological accommodations acceptable because they leave Jesus Christ at the normative center as the final revelation. Instead of the finality of Christ and the superiority of Christianity as the religion bearing witness to him (Barth), they would speak of the "parity" of religions (Hick & Knitter 1987:37). There are "many names" for God (Hick), and there are many "saviors" (Knitter). Jesus is the "decisive" and "normative" name and Savior *for Christians only*.

### Motivating concerns

What motivates this radical leap which Hick calls a "Copernican revolution," and others refer to as taking Christ from the "center" and placing him at the "leading edge"? Those engaged in the discussion are all confessing Christian theologians, and they claim to be explicating what is implicit in the message of Jesus himself. After all, they point out, Jesus was "theocentric" in his message of the "kingdom of God." Is this simply the refurbishing of the older liberal relativism of Troeltsch?

I see three foci of concern in these writings. The first is the cultural-political. The second is theological, and the third is in some sense missiological.

Culturally, the concern is to repudiate the colonialist and patriarchal motifs and strategies that have characterized the life and mission of Western Christianity (Hick/Knitter, 1987:39-40). They are deeply conscious, and rightly so, of the arrogant, condescending, and imperialistic stance of the Christian church through the past centuries. Hick's chapter in *The Myth of Christian Unique-*

*ness* outlines this embarrassing history. And Tom Driver sums it up well when he writes,

"Were it not for the fact of the political decolonization of the world," writes Panikkar, "we would not be speaking the way we are today." Over the whole discussion of pluralism there hangs the specter of colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, exploitation of the weak, and warfare. It is this history that makes the topic urgent (Hick/Knitter, 1987:217).

Certainly we must shamefacedly admit that the claims of Jesus Christ have been seriously misrepresented as claims to superiority of power and technical knowledge rather than to radical servanthood of the crucified God. The verbal message of Jesus' humility and *agape* was set in the context of Western imperialism and power. So far as other religions were concerned the mission across cultures has been carried out more in the spirit of "search and destroy" than in respect for others' cultures and self-identity.

Theologically, the concern is to develop a theology of world religions which does justice to the universality and impartiality of God's love, and the salvific intent of all revelation; to acknowledge the freedom of God's Spirit to be present where it will; to recognize the integrity of those outside the realm of Judeo-Christian revelation who "do by nature what the law requires" showing that "the law is written on their hearts" and thus may "perhaps be excused on the day when . . . God judges the secrets of men *by Jesus Christ* (Rom. 2:14-16).

But further there is concern to change the metaphor of Christ as "judge" to that of "pioneer"—to move him from pivotal "center" to the "leading edge" (along with other religious giants?) of the religious quest. They claim that when we make the historical human being, Jesus of Nazareth, absolute we make an idol of him. They insist that we recognize the contextual and relative character of all revelation *in history* including that which came through Jesus. The disclosure in and through Jesus is to be seen as "decisive but non-normative" for those outside the Christian tradition.

Missiologically, the concern is to move toward a consistently dialogical and confessional (testimonial) stance in Christian witness, and thus to free the church from the invidious and judgmental contrasts that are implicit in claims to superiority. Their assertion that the church has been very reticent to listen and learn from those with whom it tried to share the good news is, with a few exceptions, correct. In general, the missionary role has not been defined as dialogue with other religious viewpoints.

This aloofness and unwillingness of missionaries to listen could only be interpreted by peoples to whom they went as lack of respect for their cultures. And surely in the spirit of Jesus our witness to the gospel must be dialogical, not polemical and apologetic (defensive). As David Lochhead writes in *The Dialogical Imperative, A Christian Reflection on Interfaith Encounter*, "To love one's neighbor as oneself is to be in a dialogical relationship with one's neighbor. More specifically, the New Testament puts the command in striking form: we are to love our neighbors *as God has loved us*" (Lochhead 1988:80).

While the ethical and cultural sensitivity characterized by this position is highly praiseworthy, does not their compromise undercut the very ground for such concern for others? Certainly Paul Knitter's insistence that the authentic meaning of Jesus' message is understood only in the context of dialogue and identification with the oppressed rings true to our Anabapt-

ist heritage! (See chapter 10 of *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions*, 1985.) But we must also continue to insist that the authority of the crucified Christ, *which is the authority of love and can only be demonstrated in the witness of servanthood*, is a universal normative authority.

### Critique

Those who hold to this new religious pluralism, especially the Catholic ones, insist that they stand in continuity with the orthodox tradition. In chapter 9 of his book, Knitter carefully reviews the evidence from Scripture that "confirms the validity of the theocentric model" (Knitter 1985:xiv). Panikkar insists that his theological position is consonant with Catholic doctrine. For example, he says that "the mystery of the Trinity is the ultimate foundation for pluralism" (Hick & Knitter 1987:110). In response to an earlier review of the Hick and Knitter symposium Panikkar remonstrates that he is not a "relativist" but only pointing to the "relativity" of all contextual religious experience (*International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, April 1989, 80). Nevertheless, the position raises serious problems that it does not satisfactorily resolve. Langdon Gilkey, who shares the position, admits that it involves us in a continuing radical paradox.

For me there are three major areas of unresolved problems, namely, in the formal theological, the factual, and the hermeneutical areas.

The basic **theological** problem, in spite of most of the authors' protests, is relativism. As Max Stackhouse points out, the *dogmatizing of relativism* is a serious danger in the contemporary pluralism movement (Costa 1988:5). Langdon Gilkey also recognizes the radicality of this new situation which he calls "real relativism" (Hick & Knitter 1987:43).

Gilkey faces candidly what he feels is the only live option which has been forced on us by more recent cultural and political developments, namely, recognition of the "parity" of a plurality of cultures and religions. He admits that this "plurality as parity" is a "monstrous shift indeed" from the earlier Christian—even liberal Christian—position, but he sees no way forward except to "hold on with infinite passion to both ends of the dialectic of relativity and absoluteness" (Hick & Knitter 1987:50). He maintains that a "relative manifestation of the absolute meaning" does not negate the reality of that absolute (1987:49), and therefore that an expression of the absolute may be *relative yet true*. With this understanding we must forge ahead in "*intelligent practice*" of cooperation and dialogue (1987:46).

Gordon Kauffman affirms a thorough historical relativism with "human imaginative creativity" replacing "revelation" and human welfare as the pragmatic norm (Hick & Knitter 1987:8-9). Others like W. C. Smith affirm a universal religiousness of which religions and their ideologies are particular cultural (relative) expressions. In his own words "it is a mistake to identify one's own 'religion' or tradition with God, or with absolute truth; to regard it as divine, rather than as an avenue to, or from the divine" (Hick & Knitter 1987:59).

Rosemary Reuther holds much the same point of view but states it in more explosive language. She says that "true revelation and true relationship to the divine is to be found in all religions. God/ess is the ground of all beings, and not just of human beings." Therefore, "the idea that Christianity, or even the biblical faiths, have a monopoly

on religious truth is an outrageous and absurd religious chauvinism" (Hick & Knitter 1987:141).

Hick, Knitter, Panikkar, and others try to find ways to preserve the universal relevance of Christ without affirming his "absoluteness" or "exclusiveness." Their solution is to maintain Christ's normativeness for those who stand within the Christian tradition, but for those outside the tradition his revelation can only be offered as a relative, albeit a distinctive, significant contribution to interreligious dialogue.

While the position of Tom Driver may not be acceptable to all those who espouse the pluralist perspective, I do not see how they can escape his conclusion. He writes,

*In pluralist perspective, it is not simply that God has one nature variously and inadequately expressed by different religious traditions. It is that there are real and genuine differences within the Godhead itself, owing to the manifold involvements that God has undertaken with the great variety of human communities* (Hick & Knitter 1987:212).

There is an exceedingly fine line between "pluralism" and "polytheism," and in my judgment such a statement obscures the line completely.

The problem focuses on the status of revelation which comes to us in Jesus Christ. Is it universally normative or not? Pluralists, like Knitter, Panikkar, and Samartha claim that the normativeness of Jesus Christ can be maintained for us Christians while we do not insist upon it for others. But how can I reject the *universal* normativeness of God's revelation in Christ and still accept it with *ultimate* seriousness as *final* authority for myself?

Basic to a distinctly Christian experience of God in Christ is commitment to the absolute normativeness of the *agape* disclosed in Jesus Christ as the divine standard. "God is love." Granted, this claim for an absolute raises both philosophical and practical difficulties. That is the shape of the problem. But espousing a "nonnormative reinterpretation of Christ" for the world (Knitter 1985:193) does not untie the Gordian knot. It merely cuts it, leaving the frayed ends of the rope!

Perhaps for philosophical precision we should affirm that our historical absolutes are relative or functional absolutes. This way of stating the problem suggested by Gilkey has long appealed to me as the correct approach. This would mean that we speak of the historical self-disclosure of God in Jesus as a relative or functional absolute. God is *known to us* in the embodiment of the Word within the relativities of our history. That is simply another way of stating the paradox of incarnation.

But this is not the same as speaking of a "parity" between revelations, or of limiting the normativeness of revelation in Christ. To confess that God has truly come to humankind in various historical contexts and forms does not relieve us of the necessity to assess the normative quality of revelational claims. (As Gilkey himself recognizes, some claims made in the name of religion are "demonic!") The New Testament position is that the *agape* of God as it was disclosed in Christ is the norm by which such claims are to be evaluated.

This Christic norm must first of all be applied to the idolatrous forms of Christianity. The Christian religion in its many forms is an important human response to the revelation of God in Christ, and as such is relative in both its understanding and practice. That is why what Tillich called the "Protestant principle" is so important, and why we must always present the message of Christ in humility

and repentance. We must always realize that the message of the cross is both judgment and promise first of all upon Christianity and its missionaries. Like the apostle Paul we must of existential necessity confess that we are "the greatest of sinners."

The **factual** problem, from my perspective, involves an inaccurate assessment of the religious situation. It can be stated succinctly. The various religions of the world not only differ in complementary ways, their claims are contradictory and conflicting. It seems naive to me, for example, to say that moksha, nirvana, paradise, enlightenment, heaven, and the kingdom of God are all similar mythical perceptions of the same salvation—or that they are all valid as different concepts of salvation and effectively lead to the same God.

All religious paths simply do not lead to the top of the same mountain. Indeed, they do not even claim to in many cases. Here the more radical pluralists who speak of a range of mountains which can be seen when one gets above the clouds that veil their peaks are more realistic (Hick & Knitter 1987:213). But speaking of many mountains again raises the specter of polytheism and relativism.

Even if we assume that God has universally revealed himself, as we do in Christianity, such an assumption does not necessarily imply that all the different revelation claims are equally valid or effective for the resolution of the human problem of sin. Indeed, the very definition of sin is one of the questions at issue among the world's religions.

While all God's revelation is salvific in intention and character, not every religious response is equally salvific. This is so because God's self-disclosure is unavoidably conditioned in its human reception. Human response is not only relative and imperfect, it is complicated by the fact of human sin. There are elements of autonomy and rebellion against revelation in it. Freud's contention that "god," who is the object of religion, is a religious wish projection, and Barth's appraisal of religion as one aspect of human rebellion, are certainly in large part correct.

Thus the problem of idolatry—of false claims, self-serving projections, and ineffectual remedies—remain a serious problem in interfaith relationships and assessments which cannot be resolved by simply granting "parity" to them as ways of salvation.

Since Christianity as a religion (dogma, cult, worldview, and ethic) must also confess its imperfection and sinfulness, Christians must be humbly open to correction through dialogue. But this does not mean that in principle they begin with an assumption of parity between Vishnu, Buddha, Amaterazu (Japan's sun goddess), and Christ as historical revelations. Rather, from a biblical perspective, as Barth rightly saw, Jesus Christ stands for the way of salvation beyond every religion, including Christianity. And he is the judgment upon all forms of idolatry, including those in Christianity.

The only advantage which can be claimed for Christianity, like Judaism before it, is that it has been given the historical privilege and responsibility to present Jesus Christ as God's judge and promise to the nations (Rom. 3:1-2). This does not give it any superiority of either status or inherent character. To be the servant of God is to be the suffering servant of the world. Indeed, "the time has come for judgment to begin at the household of God" (1 Pet. 4:17).

The **hermeneutical** problem has two related foci, namely the mythical nature and the evolutionary process of Christological formulations. All the authors seems to

assume that the Christological formulations are simply mythic descriptions of the religious "*saving experience*" which was mediated through Jesus. It is this saving experience of Jesus which Knitter calls "the experience of revelation" (1985:175). This raises the question whether the Christ figure is to be interpreted as a new *mythic* perspective on life, or as the *prophetic* promise of a new kind of life.

Jesus not only initiated a new self-transcending religious experience, but also made eschatological promises. He announced a historical fulfillment of God's rule on earth which he promised as "Son of man" to inaugurate. He proclaimed, both in action and in teaching, that the way of the cross and resurrection is God's way of working in the world. Jesus, as he was understood by his immediate disciples, experienced resurrection as historical reality of which his own example was the *arrabon* (down payment), not as a mythic interpretation of transcendent experience.

A nonmythical, i.e., a genuinely historical understanding of "the Christ" raises the question who Jesus is and whether he can deliver on his promises; whether the resurrection, even though it is shrouded in mystery, is historical reality; whether this man who speaks with the authority of God and calls us to a life and death commitment really is the historical manifestation of God. If so, an element of exclusivism is inevitably and ineradicably involved.

The prophetic promise poses quite a different kind of situation than that which is raised by new mythical insight. It raises not only the question of ideological "truth" but of unique historical event and even exclusiveness, unless, of course, it can be demonstrated that the same thing has happened elsewhere.

If Christology is merely the mythic explanation of the new, distinctive salvation experience of God in Christ, then dialogue with other religions can proceed on a "parity" basis. If, on the other hand as I would hold, Christology is the continuing attempt to understand the mystery of a unique eschatological event then the dialogue will be of another sort. It will remain incumbent on Christians in the spirit and service of Christ to "proclaim" and demonstrate the new event which has changed the parameters of dialogue.

The second hermeneutical problem concerns the "evolutionary" process of Christological definition and the limits of contextualization. As we have noted, Knitter says that Christology developed as the mythic portrayal of the "saving experience of Jesus." He writes further that the early Christians found symbols in the cultures around them to "express who Jesus was *for them*" (*italics mine*). Their images, titles, and claims for Jesus were sociologically conditioned by the "classicist culture" in which they lived. This accounts for the exclusivistic language which they used to describe their experience. Thus he says that "all the 'one and only' qualifiers to the various christological titles pertain more to the *medium* used by the New Testament than to its core *message*" (1985:182). He continues,

*Understood from such a sociological perspective, the absolute and exclusive quality of New Testament christology tells us more about the social situation of the early church than about the ontological nature of Jesus. . . . Its purpose was more to define identity and membership within the community than to define the person of Jesus for all time.* (1985:184)

Thus today in a pluralistic, historically minded world, says Knitter, we need to adapt the language of exclusivity,



finality, and normativeness. We may use it confessionally to express our own allegiance, but not as a factual statement of the actual situation in the world. There are in fact a variety of "saviors" in the religions of the world whose claims must be respected and acknowledged as valid for different segments of the world's populations. Jesus is a "unique," "distinctive," "universally important" revealer of the kingdom of God, but he is not God's normative revelation for the whole human family. And Knitter feels that this contextual adaptation can be made without doing violence to the biblical witness.

One can admit Knitter's points that the Christology of the New Testament is pluriform, dialogical, contextual, and developmental without adopting his relativistic position. Others like C. F. D. Moule have made those points before him. The question is whether the Christological statements of the New Testament are attempts to describe a distinctive religious commitment, or are primarily attempts to understand and account for a unique historical person and event (the myth-history issue). Did anything distinctively new happen in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ that has changed the religious situation? Something analogous to the fusion of atoms at room temperature which might change the energy situation?

Even if we answer this latter question in the affirmative, we will still need to contextualize our Christological explanations. However, that will not entitle us to use a sociological analysis of language under the rubric of evolutionary development to change the subject of Christology from the person of Christ to the religious experience inaugurated by him.

### Concluding response

We are undoubtedly at an important turning point in the history and practice of missionary activity in the church. At such a time we must take the pluralist position and analysis "seriously if not literally." Even though we cannot accept the implicit relativism of a "nonnormative Christology," we ought to test evangelical theology and practice against its challenge. In the spirit of dialogue we should be ready to learn from it, and to repent where our theology has presumed privileged status and authority for Western Christianity.

There are some elements of exclusivism in the traditional orthodoxies that ought to be abandoned. Certainly no one who knows the history of Christianity with its crusades against its competitors (enemies), its internecine strife, persecution of heretics, etc., can seriously claim that it is an exclusively superior religion!

We must reexamine the claim that there is no authentic salvific revelation outside the Judeo-Christian tradition and adjust our mission theology and strategies accordingly. The Bible itself makes it clear that God has not left himself without universal witness, and it is a sacrilege against God to suggest that such witness is a less than effectual offer.

Such a theological adjustment will require us to reconsider the idea that all "non-Christians," i.e., ideological nonbelievers, are ipso facto damnation-bound. This doctrine is a kind of Protestant fundamentalist revision of the now disavowed Catholic doctrine that outside the institutional church there is no salvation. It has traditionally been used both to motivate Christians to mission and to determine the strategy of missions. It should be dropped on both counts because it implies a judgment of the human heart that belongs only to God. Further, it inevitably presumes a superior, favored status for the Christian religion which the doctrine of grace gives us no right to claim.

We can and must affirm that outside *the grace of God*

*as manifested in Christ* there is no salvation, but we have no authority to tie salvation to any religious ideology. The message of grace directs the church to proclaim gladly and urgently the good news in the spirit of "dialogical relationship" (Lochhead, 1988:77-81) while we leave all judgment in the hands of God.

We must reaffirm that the Spirit of Christ who is Lord of the ongoing mission is in no sense under the control of the missionary church. We must clearly renounce what Stanley Samartha calls the claim to "the exclusiveness of possession" of Christ (Coward, 1985:39). Apostolic witnesses (missionaries) are to be servants of the nations under the authority and in the Spirit of Christ. As such they must be ready to learn what the Spirit has to teach them through the medium of others' cultures and religious experience. Our stance certainly should be confessional and hermeneutical rather than judgmental and apologetic. This in itself would remove much of the offensiveness of Western claims to superiority.

We must be ready to give up the implicit claim that our *Western theological interpretation* is the normative standard for proclaiming Christ in all cultural contexts. The emerging church in every nation must have the freedom to develop its own theological vocabulary and practices in dialogue with its cultural context which includes religion. Further, we must be ready to readjust our own Western theological categories in light of new insights which result from intercultural dialogue.

In conclusion we need to reexamine what it means to make Christ normative for all human cultures. I offer three tentative suggestions. It means first of all that we recognize Christ as the absolute norm for *the missionary church*. Paul made this point for the Jewish missionaries who presented the Torah as a norm for others, but failed to apply it fully to themselves (Rom. 2-3). Paul's warning applies equally to Christians. The failure of Western Christendom to recognize the authority of Christ in its own cultural context has been perhaps the greatest scandal in its exclusivist message.

The command of Christ to "take up the cross and follow after (him)" is first of all normative for missions. This means taking the way of servanthood and weakness. It means humility and repentance in the presentation of an unattained ideal as the promise of Christ. "We preach Christ, and ourselves as your servants," wrote Paul (2 Cor. 4:15). The gospel's exclusive element is one of faith, hope, and love, not knowledge, dogma, and power.

Second, the recognition of Christ's universal authority means the recognition of the universal normativeness of *God's agape* across cultures. *Agape* is the love of God as it was embodied in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and this *agape* is present as God's offer and potential to all humankind. The missionary message makes this offer and potential historically explicit.

Thus the controlling norm for all missionary proclamation—both motive and content—is "the *agape* of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:14). And, as David Lochhead has very ably pointed out, the agapeic stance requires a "dialogical relationship" (1988:77ff.). Respect for the various cultural self-identities of people and of sincere religious practice is implicit in *agape*.

Finally, a christic norm is a norm of authentic praxis. Here we have much to learn both from the Anabaptist martyrs and from contemporary liberation theology. Jesus was given "the name above every name" by virtue of his full identity with humanity in its shameful oppression, and

his humble service unto death (Phil. 2:9-11). It is precisely as the embodiment of the "kingdom of God," i.e., the authority and justice of God (Matt. 6:33), that he is the universal norm.

Because this is so, the proclamation of the exclusive normativeness of Christ must be authenticated by its demonstration as well as rational defense.

## How My Understanding of Mission Has Developed

MIRIAM KRANTZ

### Preparation

I was a very active farm girl, the outdoor type with a fondness for young animals. But whenever possible I would settle into a comfortable overstuffed chair with a book. I especially enjoyed missionary stories and a series of books about children from other lands. I read and reread them. Geography was a favorite subject in school. I gained appreciation for people whose customs were different from my own, and I also understood that everyone needed to learn about Jesus.

When I was ten I accepted the Lord Jesus as my personal Savior during evangelistic meetings at my home church. Since I was an active child, no one seemed to notice that I stood to my feet during the invitation. After the service one of the ministers' wives came to me and said, "Tonight you have made the most important decision of your life." It was through this experience that I came to understand that Jesus, who spoke so clearly *to me*, could also speak to someone else so directly *about me*. Jesus was as real to me as anyone I already knew. This affected my understanding of Jesus' life and mission—of how he meets people in ministry. The following year while laid up with rheumatic fever, I learned about the power of prayer. Although the original prognosis was not good, two years later the tests were clear.

During ninth-grade summer Bible school I was first awakened to the conviction of becoming a missionary. At age 15, during a period of examining and questioning common to teenagers, I clearly heard God's call to go someday to a Hindu country. This happened when I saw slides of India shown by friends of my parents. I realized that some items on my teenage agenda would have to change. Two months later during a special service at my home congregation I quietly consecrated my life to the Lord and his service. That decision was followed by a need to search God's Word for answers to my questions and for clear direction. Some of my deepest thoughts about sharing the gospel came to me in the form of simple poetry which reflected concern for my home community as well as for overseas.

After my mother's death, I faced the possibility of dropping out of high school to take care of household responsibilities. The situation was resolved through the assistance of a sister-in-law. I shared with my father my sense of call and the need for further education. When I was led to talk to one of my ministers about my missionary call, he was able to point to some helpful Scripture and to give the encouragement I needed. Weekly

prayer meetings became an important link in the community of faith. Opportunities to teach within the congregation opened up, and I was urged to give personal witness in other settings. The same minister's wife who affirmed my conversion in a special way affirmed my call to mission. She told me of the time that, at age two, I accidentally drank poison. The church had a special prayer meeting for me, and she was shown by God that I would go overseas as a missionary someday. She wisely kept this to herself until I had publicly stated my commitment. This experience emphasized for me the importance of the Lord's timing—i.e., when to speak and when to keep quiet and simply listen and observe.

Between high school and college I was able, in addition to assignments within the congregation, to take Bible correspondence courses, attend Missionary Training Institute, serve as counselor at a summer camp, and earn some money toward tuition. I began to learn the discipline of *profitable waiting*—a valuable lesson at home and even more so in the Asian context!

College brought exposure to people with all levels of Christian commitment and motivations. It became a sounding board for many of my ideas and beliefs. The discipline of academic study, the opportunities for rural mission involvement, and the deep friendships that formed were invaluable. When I chose to write a term paper on "The Ethics of Hinduism," my professor took time to listen and respond. I knew a few student friends who discarded their Christian faith for more tolerant views. Through listening to these friends I was learning to listen and respond to those brought up in other religions.

Toward the end of my senior year I had left the college pastor's office where arrangements had just been made for my commissioning for service in India. I was handed a telegram which read, "Visa for India refused. Letter following." A voice said to me, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." That voice from the Lord assured me that everything was in control; I had courage and calmness of spirit—gifts that have encouraged me up to the present. The next year while teaching school and studying at a university, I discovered my calling was not to the Hindu country of India but rather to the Hindu kingdom of Nepal.

### Questions and answers

In Nepal I became a colleague in the United Mission to Nepal (UMN), an international, nondenominational mission. Following four months of language study, I was to be head of the dietary department. The staff of 15 knew no English so they became my Nepali language teachers. They took the job seriously, and also saw to it that I taught them both by demonstration and in simple Nepali. A

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bonding took place between the staff and me. None of them were Christians, but one day they asked to have a prayer time within our department since hospital prayers were held when kitchen staff were too busy to attend. Nepal has a law against conversion to other religions, so I put the question back to them, "Do you understand what this would mean—reading from the Bible, the Christian's holy book, and singing songs and praying to the God whom Christians worship? Think about it, talk it over—and then let me know if this is what you really want and what time would fit the kitchen routine." They were back shortly to say all but one wanted the prayer time. And so the practice began when both shifts of staff could attend. Along the way a few came to faith in Christ. I saw reconciliation and forgiveness demonstrated and transformation from fear to freedom and joy. It surprised me that Hebrews was their favorite book, and through them I gained new insights. I was still learning how remarkably the Holy Spirit transforms lives and teaches Scriptures to those who come in simple faith to Christ—even the semiliterate. We learned together that the exchange of kingdoms brings intense spiritual warfare. The power of prayer in the name of Jesus was demonstrated repeatedly.

Fear of evil spirits was one troublesome area to the Hindu and Buddhist staff. One night at leaving time, after a serious discussion about spirit activity, staff seemed unable to go out the door. I sensed something was wrong and inquired. One of them spoke up, "We're afraid of the spirits—but *you* don't need to be afraid because the Holy Spirit is in *you*." Sometime later, returning to my house after several days' absence, I was stopped by a feeling of darkness, afraid. I went through the house praying in the name of Jesus, and a sense of peace and rest returned, along with an increased understanding of Christ's mission, his kingdom in the world. This sense of mission was further enriched when I saw my staff touched by the death of a Christian colleague in the hospital. They asked me to explain my sense of peace and the absence of uncontrolled weeping. I could share a bit about a Christian's hope in Christ, and one person responded, "So that's the reason!"

A Christian needs to deal with issues of serious illness and death among patients and colleagues and in the communities—but with the sense of Christ's presence and leading. One well-to-do Hindu patient, a widow and mother, was unable to eat the high-fat diet she needed. I felt so helpless as her condition rapidly deteriorated. Late one night while crying out to the Lord for her, I saw clearly what I should do. A short while later I sat by her bedside holding a bowl of fried bread cubes. She opened her swollen eyes, said she felt hungry, and ate every cube of bread. As her health improved she asked why I had come to her so late that night. I had the opportunity to tell her about the Lord's leading and his love and care. She felt that her life had been given back to her as a gift from God. I can only trust that there will eventually be further steps toward faith.

Later as nutritionist in a rural community health program I became aware of the nutrition needs and possibilities in village situations. The extent of malnutrition was heartbreaking for staff to observe. What must it be like for mothers to see their little ones dying—some even too weak to cry—and not know what to do? One agency donated milk powder, but milk distribution seemed to generate more problems such as dependency, diarrhea, or even risk of death.

The search for solutions led me to study community and

family food and eating practices. I did this by visiting and observing village families for one year until I could ask questions in ways that the villagers could come up with possible solutions themselves. For example, small children swallowed whole soybeans without chewing them. I asked the mothers if these undigested beans were of any benefit to the children. They said no, it was a waste, a total loss. Why didn't the children chew them? The beans are too hard. How could they be digestible? The beans could be chewed before they were given, they said, although this was said as a joke since it was not customary for mothers in that area to give prechewed food to children. Was there any other way, I asked? Well, the roasted beans could be ground into a flour. What a good idea—but do you have grinding stones? Yes, we could easily do that; we have to grind corn and wheat regularly, anyway." This kind of research and conversation led to the development of the flour mixture made from roasted whole pulses and roasted whole cereal grains known in English as sugar flour. This can be used to make a nutritional porridge or bread.

Along the way we found that families in other parts of Nepal had already done something similar for elderly people who had few teeth and poor digestion. It is a fact that before these questions were ever asked or answered by the mothers, I had laid the matter before God and trusted his leading as I experimented with ideas and with nutritional combinations of foods or paper. But it was confirmed by the word and practical demonstrations by mothers at home and in a small nutrition rehabilitation center. Thus staff and health workers from many programs learned from the mothers one simple, possible-to-do-at-home solution to malnutrition. Along the way, our association with many mothers bring insights into other cultural practices, both helpful or harmful. These learnings are now included in teaching materials at every level of the national health system as well as other international settings. I am reminded how often Jesus used questions to involve people in their own healing and growth in understanding. Our work in nutrition has been one aspect of mission which has brought us close enough to hear the heartbeat of village mothers and young children and has involved us in dialogue with local and national health and nutrition planners.

### Relationships

Administrative duties in a small developing country can present a variety of challenges. I found it is possible to relate to people from village level to ministry level in the space of one day, to sit on straw mats on a mud floor one hour and to wait in a well-appointed office the next, to take a show-and-tell nutrition class in Nepali with a group of illiterate but professionally alert traditional birth attendants in the morning and to present a planning paper in a United Nations workshop in the afternoon. It has also happened that an official phone message sent me unexpectedly to a government office where I needed to give the rationale for the direction the health program was taking. At times like these I must understand clearly who I really represent while I am a servant-guest in the land, or it would be better not to be there at all. It is best to be there by the commissioning of the sovereign Lord while joyfully depending on his wisdom. With a shift to less administrative duties I continue to value the importance of prayer for discernment, sensitivity, and patience for all those who move from office to office introducing programs, negotiating agreements, etc.



As relationships grow, there are times when I forget that I am a foreigner. Many nationals are seriously interested in the welfare of their people, even to the point of sacrifice. Then something may happen to point up the differences in our motivation—whether it is the drive to do good for personal merit, prestige, and gain; whether it is simply because of Christ's example and directive; or because of sincere concern. I have been asked many times, "Why are you here? Why do you care about our people?" In answering these questions I sometimes hear Nepalis witness to the Lord who is alive and cares and is at work in the world, in Nepal, today. At those times identification with national Christians makes me feel very much at home; the similarities of missionaries and Nepali believers on this level are remarkable and can lead to the acceptance of both by non-Christians—perhaps a first step toward their faith in the living Lord.

An awareness of others' beliefs and practices is helpful in forming friendships, in participating in cross-cultural planning and activities, and in being good neighbors. Adapting to a lifestyle appropriate for identification with persons we live and work with is necessary and is always appreciated. Friendship is possible when differences are reduced and similarities are emphasized. It somehow conveys a respect for others when I am available to listen or to be a sounding board. People are attracted to genuineness and will invite us to come to them—into their homes and their hearts. Then the opportunities come to share Christ in terms of personal faith and testimony with a natural joyfulness. Then requests come for prayer, for advice in personal, family, and job-related decisions and problems. Then the message of repentance and forgiveness which is proclaimed will be heard and by some

accepted. The uncluttered message of Jesus is attractive; it's compelling. The response may be quick acceptance or it may be a longing which needs nurture. I have seen both responses and have shared in the church with the disciplining. And it is a humbling but joyful privilege to feel with and pray for those who are on the journey toward faith or are suffering for their faith in Christ.

### Faithfulness

Missionary obedience today certainly includes the message that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the only Savior of the world, and that he is Lord. Personal acceptance and the clear and sensitive sharing of this message is our mission. Salvation and discipleship go together naturally as do the personal relationships to Christ and day-by-day faithfulness to the Word of God. Membership in the community of faith, the church, must be coupled with a sincere love and concern for others inside and outside the faith community. Loyalty to the heart of the gospel means reaching out in the name of Christ to anyone in spiritual and physical need regardless of the personal cost.

This is what the workers in the UMN aim to do. And this is what the indigenous church in Nepal is giving more mature attention to in recent years, in ways that do not compromise the gospel and which will meet the wider needs of people in caring and wise ways. It has been a privilege through the mission and the church to have a continuing role in God's mission in Nepal—through good stewardship of food and nutrition information, and in the ministry of friendship, fellowship, and the Word. We continue to ask questions on different levels as Jesus did and to share thankfully in the answers and the answer, the living God.

## How My Understanding of Mission Has Developed

ARTHUR M. CLIMENHAGA

One thing should be clear from the start. I am an MK, the son of missionary parents. My early years from five to thirteen were on the mission field in Southern Rhodesia, today called Zimbabwe, Africa. Rather than developing a rebellion against missionary life as is true of some MKs, I was impregnated with a warm romantic feeling toward the world missionary cause and career. Thus when I came to understand the saving grace of Jesus Christ in my early teens, I also became an enthusiastic supporter of the denominational world missions cause. My academic career from college through doctoral degree was focused on the concept of mission involvement and possibly overseas service. My courtship and marriage to Arlene Brubaker of Ashland, Ohio, was in the context of our mutual leading into what was then termed "foreign missions." In those early formative days in biblical studies, I came to a clear conviction that both Old and New Testaments involved a

message and mandate for world mission. Undoubtedly my articulation has sharpened over the years, but the *basic mission conviction has not changed*.

Having said that, the development in my understanding of mission has been in methodological concepts rather than message enunciation. Therefore, this is a record of my missionary journey and development of mission concept through the past half century or so.

My wife and I first arrived in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) in 1945 to be greeted by and inducted into a sizable program of institutions, church life, and evangelism. Educational programs and institutions were the largest component of the institutionalism we found. There was also a growing medical program and a sizable operation of agricultural farms at the main mission stations. The outstations (lower elementary schools and churches) were organized into districts or circuits of 25-30 units. I was assigned as superintendent of one of these circuits, which involved about six years of constant traveling from out-school to out-school, overseeing the educational program and a preaching/teaching/evangelism ministry. At times it was hard to decipher whether education or evangelism was the primary focus. During that period I also acted as

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organizer of a Bible Institute at the main mission station where we lived, and that helped me keep a spiritual focus on the mission call.

Then I was appointed as general superintendent of the total mission program in the Rhodesias (today Zimbabwe and Zambia) and as bishop of all the Brethren in Christ churches, both outstation and mission. The institutional programs were composed of central primary boarding schools, teacher training institutes, secondary/high schools, plus medical hospitals and clinics staffed by expatriate missionary doctors and nurses. Church life was organized into an effective structure of six organized districts, six central mission churches, and general evangelistic outreach.

In the development of the church structure, the missionary staff was very much in control. True, there were national church leaders known as overseers who were ordained, as well as fully functioning ministers. But the final decisions in districts were always the district missionary superintendent's responsibility. In the total central African church, the bishop and the Executive Board, comprised of missionaries with African overseers sitting in only on selected sessions largely in a strong advisory capacity, acted as the final administrative control.

While the above may strike the reader as strongly "colonial," that was not the intent of the founding missionaries. They sincerely believed they were educating a child to the point of adulthood when personal authority would be assumed. However, even as parents sometimes do not recognize adulthood as quickly as they should, it was true of missionary life and practice. In all honesty, in my first years in mission life I lived and believed in the necessity of mission control. But after several years as bishop, my perception changed, and I saw the necessity of changing to full national church administration and control as soon as possible.

As a result, with the full cooperation of both African church membership and the missionary body, African Church Executive Boards were formed by the Annual General Conferences in both Zimbabwe and Zambia comprising a ratio of 75 percent national and 25 percent missionary representation. Later, the General Conferences of Zimbabwe and Zambia were formed with total African control. Thus my concepts have developed out of my role as mission administrator.

Another area where my position on mission has changed is in the redefinition of certain missiological expressions, such as "career missionaries" and "dropouts." In 1945, I thought of career missionaries as those who served till retirement—at least to age 55 or 60. I went along with the idea that someone who served for only a few years was a dropout. Now I define dropouts as those who run away from the task on the basis of discouragement or defeat. Many have served 6-15 years who for various reasons were led into other avenues of Christian service just as definitively as they were into mission service. Were they dropouts? Positively not!

For example, following my first wife's death, I married Lona Sue Brubaker, who was then home on furlough from six years in Zambia. She was just as definitely led to accompany me into other service ministries connected with seminary and North American church life. She is not a dropout.

Third, my understanding of mission has developed in

two concepts: (1) the value of short-term workers and lay-service witness teams, and (2) the need for tent-making ministries as part of the church in mission. True, there will always be demand for long-term missionaries. However, the service involved in short-term volunteer ministries for all ages is invaluable for the resources it brings back into the life of homeland churches. The youth of another mission movement have led the way in worldwide witnessing ventures. While we may not agree with some theological stances, the experience gained from several years of mission involvement has much to teach us.

As former areas closed to the gospel are now opening for expatriate personnel in teaching, engineering, medical, and agriculture, what a challenge for our mission boards to imaginatively sponsor networks of international placements for the furtherance of the gospel!

I still believe in the sharp imperatives of Matthew 28:19, Luke 10:2, and John 20:21. But what a long way I have come in seeing how it can be fulfilled as we face A.D. 2000!

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## In Review

*Evangelical Renewal in the Mainline Churches.* Edited by Ronald H. Nash. Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1987, 174 pp., \$7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by G. Edwin Bontrager

What do America's mainline churches such as the United Methodist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, American Baptist, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, United Church of Christ, and the U.S. Roman Catholic churches have in common? A declining number of adherents and renewal movements arising from their midst. The editor brings together treatises on renewal from knowledgeable authors within their respective traditions.

I found in the eight chapters many fascinating accounts of a general trend replicated within each of the denominations. It began with a vision of one or more persons, followed by an article in a church publication, and the organization of a renewal conference. Then a renewal periodical often appeared and a renewal services organization was birthed to act as an ongoing witness to the larger denomination.

In most cases the writer follows the prominent renewal organization in each denomination. In the chapter on Lutheranism, however, scant reference was made to any renewal group. The author's definition of renewal rings out: "To be renewed is to be kept strong or to be brought back to the Triune God" (p. 70).

The strength of the book is the underlying encouragement for denominational renewal movements to avoid partisan politics. Instead, the groups need to be intent on sharing concerns, love, and goodwill.

This book is a must for lay leaders, pastors, and missionaries who are interested in today's renewal movement. Such knowledge can be an aid for all denominations as we work more closely together in the task and challenge of evangelization.

*G. Edwin Bontrager is director of Evangelism and Church Development for Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana.*

*Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate.* By Donald A. McGavran. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1988, 162 pp., \$8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Henry Poettcker

Donald A. McGavran, founder of the church growth movement and founding dean of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary tells a story and presents Christianity with a challenge.

The story is that of the church growth movement in America from the 1930s to the present. Aware of the gradual decline of church membership in many mainline denominations, due in part to what McGavran calls the tidal wave of secularism, materialism, and paganism, he emphasizes strongly the biblical mandate for evangelism. In successive chapters he characterizes the church's ministry through several periods of history from 1933 to 1985.

The story weaves together the witness of the many denominations and their seminaries. In McGavran's opinion, the seminaries in particular have been so influenced by critical thought and growing pluralism that evangelism has received short shrift in the curriculum of too many ministerial training institutions. One of the counterforces for evangelistic preparation has been the development of church growth seminars, institutes, mission schools, and publications.

Woven into the fabric of this story is the challenge which McGavran seeks to present to churches and seminaries. His theological conviction underlying the church growth movement is dependence upon an authoritative Word of God made known in the Bible and manifested by our Lord Jesus Christ. From that source comes the unequivocal call to evangelize *all nations*. Administrators and faculty members of seminaries need to hear that call and by it structure their programs in which pastors are trained. "Unless pastors in preparation see an accurate picture of the degree to which people in their cities or counties are practicing Christians, nominal Christians, or non-Christians, they cannot win many through conversion to Christian faith. Unless theological schools also see these things accurately for their own and other nations, they cannot know what eternal God's command to disciple the peoples of earth means to church leaders today" (p.77).

This point McGavran drives home. That we must heed and train accordingly.

*Henry Poettcker, formerly president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winni-*

*peg, is now president of Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana.*

*Death of Christendoms, Birth of the Church.* By Pablo Richard. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987, 240 pp., \$10.95 (pb)

Reviewed by John Driver

Pablo Richard is a Chilean biblicist and sociologist who teaches at the National University of Costa Rica. The title of the book aptly sums up the author's thesis. In the 19th century, colonial Christendom in Latin America reached a crisis out of which a new Christendom emerged. Since about 1960 this new Christendom, also aligned with power, is increasingly experiencing crisis. This time Christendom is not expected to survive, due to the fact that an ecclesial alternative has arisen which, by its very nature, stands in total contradiction to an alliance with political power. This is a "popular church," a church of the people, a church of the poor, which is springing up throughout Latin America. It is especially evident in the *comunidades eclesiales de base (CEB) which have proliferated in Brazil*.

Richard discerns three cycles in Latin American history: the first beginning in 1492; the second in 1808; and a third which began around 1960. It is an interpretation of history as viewed from below, rather than from a perspective of power. Traditional conservative or liberal interpretations of history will, quite naturally, arrive at different conclusions.

The crisis of the earlier colonial Christendom (1492-1808) provides the author with an analogy for interpreting the crisis which has come upon the new Christendom in our time. However, there is a fundamental difference. Now there is a defined and structured church project, with significant sociological and theological weight behind it which stands in open contradiction to Christendom. In the opinion of the author, it is this community of contradiction which is making the demise of Christendom irreversible.

However, Richard does recognize the very real possibility that a restructuring of the current form of Christendom could occur in a "new alliance with Latin American authoritarian states and with a new hegemonic sector of the dominant classes." He notes the ongoing existence of an "ecclesiastico-military new Christendom" which tries to make the Christian faith



compatible with national security ideology (p.160).

In this context, hope for the future lies in the church that is being born today in Latin America outside of any possible Christendom project. "The church of the poor appears as the only future of the universal church" (p.191).

This book is a must for those who want to understand the history and theology of the church in Latin America from a Latin American perspective. Following an incredibly dense and technical introduction the book is very readable. Frequent summaries serve to keep the reader on track.

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*John Driver serves with Mennonite Board of Missions as missionary, teacher, and writer in Montevideo, Uruguay.*

#### **Christian Ethics and U.S. Foreign Policy.**

By Mark R. Amstutz. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academic Books, 1987, 192 pp., \$12.95 (pb)

**Reviewed by Ronald J. R. Mathies**

The title should interest anyone involved in the work of the global church. Here is a discussion on how Christian ethical considerations could/should be engaged in the formulation of foreign policy. The volume covers topics such as morality, Christianity and the church in foreign policy, and justice, peace, human rights, and poverty in the international arena. It is written for the concerned Christian citizen and not for the specialist. Amstutz is a professor of political science at Wheaton College.

The author contends that Christians have responsibility to promote human dignity and influence international affairs and foreign policy. His conceptual framework is based on three assumptions: power is a legitimate force in world politics, the contemporary world system is morally legitimate, and the United States has an important role in promoting justice and protecting liberty in the world community.

From these assumptions several arguments are supported that I personally found neither compelling nor reassuring; that the present world economic order is a relatively neutral system for which there is "no morally superior alternative"; that the U.S. invasion of Grenada was acceptable because of the strategic necessity to curb the military capabilities and revolutionary character of the then government; that nuclear deterrence is an evil that must be temporarily tolerated for the greater

good of world peace and protection from totalitarian communist aggression; that the best Christian response to third world poverty is to "encourage expansion of employment opportunities and increase the productive levels of existing jobs"; that the "causes of contemporary world poverty are rooted in the underlying cultural and moral systems of developing nations and in the incomplete and disjointed application of modernity in those states."

While disagreeing fundamentally with several of the positions taken in the book, I found it well written and provocative. The author provides a useful critique of church (especially mainline Protestant and Catholic bishops) efforts at influencing foreign policy. His constant call for greater involvement of Christians in making our world more just and humane is well taken. While biblical principles are highlighted throughout, I wish that a stricter application of these principles would have yielded different conclusions.

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*Ronald J. R. Mathies is director of the Peace and Conflict Studies at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario.*

**God's Word for a Complex World: Discovering How the Bible Speaks Today.** By Andrew Kirk. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987, 172 pp., \$11.95 (pb)

**Reviewed by V. George Shillington**

Andrew Kirk wrote this book out of concern for an authentic application of the teaching of Scripture to the realities of life in a postindustrial era, convinced that such a book as his does not yet exist (p.x). But the very responsible work of Richard Rohrbaugh, *The Biblical Interpreter: An Agrarian Bible in an Industrial Age*, deals precisely with the same subject.

The book is targeted at Christian readers from all walks of life. Rarely does any technical language appear, and when it does, the terms are defined.

The argument in each chapter is clear and precise. But the author's way of organizing the chapters to prove his thesis is somewhat puzzling. Pertinent to Kirk's thesis is the direction in which the instruction of the Bible should flow: It should issue from the text of Scripture to life, not from life-experience to Scripture and back to life, as in Liberation Theology (pp. 54f., 61f.). Yet Kirk discusses the nature and scope of politics *prior to* handling texts of

the Old and New Testaments.

In other words, Kirk starts with a political theory which he deems correct for all, and then proceeds to study texts of the Old and New Testaments to illustrate how the Christian church can be a prophetic voice in society to call the political power brokers to account when they stray from the goal and plan of the political purpose.

A glaring weakness of the book, in my opinion, is that the *particularity* of political situations is missing. Countries such as South Africa, Iran, Jordan, where the politics cry out for prophetic witness, are not given a line in this volume as possible cases where the message of the Bible could be brought to bear meaningfully.

Kirk is quite correct to emphasize the need to build bridges between the Bible's message and contemporary reality. He is to be commended for urging us to work patiently at making the appropriate connection between the biblical text and issues of the present time. He finds in each of the two Testaments three factors: an institution, a text, and a theme by which to speak to the contemporary concern. In this triadic way of applying Scripture to modern political life, Kirk hopes to avoid the pitfalls of other approaches.

*God's Word for a Complex World* encourages the reader to take seriously the relevance of the Bible's message for modern times. Church groups and individuals could use it fruitfully as a guide for thoughtful discussion.

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*V. George Shillington is professor of New Testament at Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.*

**Reaching the Unreached: The Old-New Challenge.** Edited by Harvie M. Conn. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1985, \$8.95 (pb)

**Reviewed by Henry J. Schmidt**

*Reaching the Unreached* is the fruit of nine contributors to a mission consultation held at Westminster Seminary (March 16-18, 1983). The book refocuses the unfinished missionary task by calling the church to see "people groups" who have no church wherein new believers can "find a home of their own."

The eleven chapters divide into two main themes: (a) biblical basis and development of the "unreached peoples" concept (ch. 1-4); (b) strategic implica-

tions for churches, mission boards, and seminaries (ch. 5-11). Robert D. Recker anchors the concern that "no people, or pocket of people, can be ignored, overlooked or written off" in the universal dimension of the gospel.

Tracing the historical development of the "unreached peoples" concept, Ralph D. Winter credits McGavran's *The Bridges of God* (1955) as the watershed in refocusing mission as people groups.

The section dealing with strategic implications covers a wide range of missiological concerns. Readers will find three chapters particularly stimulating. Roger Greenway asks probing questions: Are Western churches ready and willing to increase cross-cultural missionaries to reach the unreached? Where do national churches of the third world fit into this perspective? Will boards, churches, and schools recognize the need for specially gifted and trained missionaries for reaching the unreached?

Paul E. McKaughan wrestles with the institutionalization of mission agencies and suggests practical ways to assure the constant flow of new vision, people, and structures into the lifecycle of mission agencies. Addison Soltau chides seminaries for their "static and isolationist" training. "Consistent pressure," he calls, "must be brought to bear to undermine the age-long concept that the routine business of church is unrelated to mission, and the church's missionary outreach is limited to specialists."

The book deserves a wide hearing. Mission leaders, pastors, and interested laypersons will find it useful. It is well written and deals with major missiological issues in very practical, understandable ways.

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*Henry J. Schmidt is associate professor of World Mission and director of the Center for Training in Mission/Evangelism at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California.*

***The Threshold Is High.*** By Doyle C. Book. Nappanee, Ind.: Evangel Press, 1986, 209 pp., \$7.95 (pb)

**Reviewed by Ivan D. Wohlgemuth**

This book tells the exciting story of the Brethren in Christ in Japan. The author so eloquently captures the spirit of that new challenge by the following paragraph: "The missionaries were very young. They

couldn't have known what lay ahead. But they knew the Lord. And they knew He had called. They had taken their first step over a strange new threshold. It was a step of faith. The step was to take them into an adventure of life-changing dimensions. For the threshold is much higher than they realized then."

The author wishes to accomplish three things: (1) to record major events and some details involved in the beginning of the mission, the development of its work, and the growth of the church from 1953 to 1985; (2) to give insights into the dynamics involved in the communicating of the gospel across cultural barriers; and (3) to evaluate reasons for the growth of the church, or its lack of growth, and to assess the policies used by the mission in its approach to evangelism.

Certainly this narrative of God's leading and empowerment of people dedicated to evangelism and church planting should be an inspiration and challenge to the reader.

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*Ivan D. Wohlgemuth works in Stewardship Ministries for the Mennonite Brethren Conference. He served as a missionary in Japan from 1963 to 1983.*

***Alaskan Missionary Spirituality.*** Edited by Michael Oleksa. New York: Paulist Press, 1987, 275 pp., \$18.95.

**Reviewed by Johannes Reimer**

This collection of historical documents on the Russian Orthodox Mission in Alaska is very important research, and the first of its kind in English.

The collection consists of letters, reports, tracts, and instructions by Father Herman, missionary to the Suppiai; selected writings of John Veniaminow or Holy Innocent, who became the first Bishop of Alaska in 1840 and later Metropolitan of Moscow; and the work of several other writers. These writings portray methodology and results of the mission of the Orthodox Church. All documents are organized in five sections: (1) historical beginnings of the mission; (2) evangelistic methods and the missionaries; (3) teaching and nurture by the missionary church; (4) defending the rights of the Aleutians; and (5) a tribute to the work of the Russian Church in Alaska.

Profoundly appreciative of the Aleutian culture, the Orthodox missionaries used

religious ideas and values indigenous to the Aleutians as a bridge to communicate the Orthodox teaching in the cultural context of the ethnically exclusive group. Their mission was holistic, combining evangelism with creating a written language, building schools, and providing social services. The next step of this complex Orthodox mission was the creation of an Independent Alaskan Orthodox Church with its own plan for missionary expansion. While such missionary methods may have run counter to the colonizing interests of the Russian government, the documents indicate that the missionary work was eventually taken over by the Aleutians of Alaska.

In summary, this book is both informative and instructive, helping missiologists and missionaries of the West understand the mission of the Russian Orthodox Church. The documents fill a real gap between Western and Russian history of church and mission.

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*Johannes Reimer is director of LOGOS, Bielefeld, West Germany.*

***Bold Bearers of His Name.*** By William N. McElrath. Nashville: Tenn., Broadman Press, 1987, 274 pp., \$12.95.

**Reviewed by Mary Laurie**

*Bold Bearers of His Name* is a collection of 40 true world mission stories. This book is written for children, but adults with an interest in mission would also find it appealing. In our home, we read the stories as a devotional with our children; they would also be very suitable stories for Sunday school or midweek program.

The message that God is real and cares about our situation and need speaks loudly from these stories of missionaries of the past. The stories are an inspiration and encouragement to all who read them.

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*Mary Laurie is secretary-receptionist at the Mennonite Brethren Conference office, Fresno, California.*

*Reflection and Projection: Missiology at the Threshold of 2001—Festschrift in Honor of George W. Peters for His Eightieth Birthday.* Edited by Hans Kasdorf and Klaus W. Muller. Bad Lubenzell: Verlag der Liebenzeller Mission, 1988, 504 pp., \$18.00 (DM 29.80)

**Reviewed by Peter Falk**

The book is a "Festschrift" and thus belongs to a unique literary genre, allowing the editors a certain amount of freedom in selecting contributions that resonate the pulsebeat of the major missiological focus while maintaining a diverse literary style. The uniqueness also lies in the fact that the book is bilingual: all major articles in English are followed by a summary in German and vice versa.

Standing "at the dawn of the third millennium" the editors attempt to "take stock of our past missionary action, critically assess our role in the present involvement, and boldly chart a course for our future in world mission." In order to achieve the projected goal, they have divided the book into six significant sections. The first deals with the "Life and Work of George W. Peters." The other five sections deal with significant dimensions of missiology to which Peters contributed in his lifetime and which are vital for the future in world mission: "Theology," "History," "Religions," "Social Sciences," and "Theory and Practice." Thus the book contains valuable presentations on these different aspects of missiological thought and involvement.

The editors begin by placing the church's mission in its divine origin manifested through the sanctified life of believers who, because of their trustworthiness, have won credibility and openness for the message of the gospel. They further indicate that Christian ethics are the result of sanctification, demonstrating God's mercy toward people in the world. Rooted in the nature of God, mission becomes the life-consuming possession of his people. God sent Jesus Christ to restore fallen human beings to fellowship with himself.

In the next two sections Kasdorf pleads for a servanthood missiology; Walls stresses the importance to make clear moral choices; Burkle explains that African Christianity can help us understand the ontological transformation of humanity and this world by the historical Christ-event; Hesselgrave notes that Christianity is absolutely unique among the religions of the world; Hoppenworth maintains that only God can accomplish true redemption

through faith in Jesus Christ.

The final sections present the unique value system in each culture and its relation to the Christian faiths. It is also noted that nominal Christianity is an obstacle to the gospel. Finally, Christians are called to prayer.

Strategies and structures are set forth which will move beyond today's forms to face the worldwide church in decades ahead. The 23 contributors present various dimensions of missionary involvement and boldly chart a course for our future in world mission. We recommend the book for serious study and reflection.

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*Peter Falk, formerly a missionary with General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Overseas Mission, now resides in Ontario.*

*Kingdoms in Conflict.* By Charles Colson. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William Morrow/Zondervan, 1987, 399 pp., \$15.95

**Reviewed by Arthur M. Climenhaga**

Once again Charles Colson has written a thought-provoking book. One is constantly grateful that he came to know Jesus Christ personally as Savior and Lord and that his keen intellect is thus put to work in reflecting and writing on issues facing the Christian world today.

This latest work is no exception to what we have come to expect from his pen. Starting with a cliff-hanging realistic scenario of a president elected on a so-called Christian ticket making a decision that could lead to Armageddon, Colson moves into sharp analysis of the church, its ministers and members, and their place and involvement in national politics.

It is not the purpose of this review to tell what Colson says on these issues. This reviewer suspects that even among Anabaptists there will be mixed reactions to some of Colson's conclusions. Particularly evident is the fact that Colson's analyses are based on a presumption that not all war is necessarily off limits to evangelical Christians. However, Colson is not an ardent militarist and he says things that we who are in the Anabaptist camp need to hear.

For one thing, his searching comments on the dangers of over-emotional involvement in political concerns should speak sharply to us in our deliberations on the

moves we make in our peacemaking endeavors. Reading about *Kingdoms in Conflict* makes one wonder if we Anabaptists are in danger of falling into programmatic concepts too similar in design to those of the "ultra-fundamentalist right" whose positions are of such concern to so many of us. Whether you agree with the author or not, Colson's work is one of the sharpest wrestlings with the Christian and political power conflicts currently written. Therefore, all leaders, lay or minister, in the Anabaptist movement today should thoughtfully and prayerfully read *Kingdoms in Conflict*.

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*Decide for Peace: Evangelicals Against the Bomb.* Edited by Dana Mills-Powell. Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986, 208 pp., 3.95 (in pounds)

**Reviewed by Robert L. Ramseyer**

John Stott in his foreword describes this book and its authors well. "First, they are all evangelical Christians who are resolved to submit to the lordship of Christ, and so to the authority of the Scripture which he endorsed. Most of the book's chapters are, in fact, biblical studies. Secondly, the authors are the kind of evangelical Christians who have repented of the old pietism, which previously held sway among us, and which emphasized personal commitment at the expense of social involvement. Instead, these writers are struggling to relate God's Word to the harsh and horrific realities of contemporary nuclear arsenals. Their particular concerns lead them also to write of peace in relation to other realities such as world hunger, racism, the deprivations of the inner city, stewardship of the environment and the need for spiritual revival. Thirdly, the authors of this book glow with passion. They make no attempt to hide the deep feelings which their topic stirs within them" (p. xi).

Some of the authors are familiar to *Mission Focus* readers: Michael Green, Andrew Kirk, Alan Kreider, Chris Sugden. Some of them are pacifists, many are not.



One author, Rob Warner, describes their common standpoint this way: "... there are two Christian approaches to war—just war and pacifism—but when it comes to nuclear war, both are in agreement. As an evangelical, if you want to obey the biblical mandate, either as a pacifist or as a just warrior, you need to be a nuclear pacifist" (p. 147).

If evangelicals need reminding of how concerns for the poor, for social justice, for peace are integrally part of the evangelical tradition and message, this is an excellent book to read. In calling for revival in the tradition of John Wesley, Mark Mills-Powell puts it well: "(John Wesley) by the empowering of God's Holy Spirit initiated a spiritual revival which impacted its own society profoundly, by not *hiding* the cost of genuine discipleship, but rather by *emphasizing* it" (p. 189).

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**Working with God: Scriptural Studies in Intercession.** By D. Edmond Hiebert. New York: Carlton Press, 1987, 122 pp., \$7.95

Reviewed by Joseph C. Shenk

This collage of material on prayer is distilled from a life rich in Bible study and personal intercession. Prayer is real for D. Edmond Hiebert; you can feel it as you read. Hiebert is a man full of years who in his youth was transfixed by the vision of what could be accomplished through prayer, a vision developed through a study of the Scripture and familiarity with prayer literature spawned by the Finney Revivals and the early years of the modern missionary movement.

Professor Hiebert says nothing directly about himself and his own prayer life, unlike personalized stories which characterize most of the popular contemporary literature on prayer. Hiebert's book is rich with human experience in prayer, particularly drawn from Scripture and from missionary and revival stories rather than from himself.

This book takes us back to a time between the Great World Wars when missionary stories and the names of Charles Finney, Ruth Stull, A. C. Dixon, Hudson Taylor, Isobel Kuhn, D. L. Moody, G. Campbell Morgan, and P. Cameron Scott were familiar in seminary classrooms and Christian homes. References to these praying people are anecdotal. Hiebert develops full-blown portraits of selected people from the Bible, including Daniel, Ephraim, Jabez, and Moses. He also mines deeply many key passages on prayer: Ezekiel 22:30-31 on God's search for a man to stand in the gap; Isaiah 59:15-16 on God's astonishment that there was no intercessor, and numerous New Testament passages.

The ten chapters are constructed like sermon outlines and each stands alone, making them useful for resource material for teaching and preaching on prayer.

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**Turning Point: A Christian Worldview Declaration.** By Herbert Schlossberg and Marvin Olasky. Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1987, 158 pp., \$6.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Eleanore Klassen

*Turning Point* is a call to arms for American Christians to confess Christ as not only Savior but Lord of our life and culture. Schlossberg and Olasky show that there is a battle between good and evil waged in our culture, and that Christians have been demoralized to believe the enemy is invincible.

Not so, say Schlossberg and Olasky. They use examples of faith in action to prove their point. They examine and define piety versus pietism and reason versus rationalism. They discuss the failure of rationalism in such issues as journalistic liberty and license, theories of the population bomb, issues of medical ethics, and the psychological risks of day care, to name a few. After giving examples of secular aggression against Christianity to show the struggle in America for the minds of citizens, Schlossberg and Olasky discuss a biblical understanding of reason, and show how piety and reason have led contemporary Christians to action. The book ends with a challenge to change our culture by developing a thoroughly Christian worldview and living our faith in all areas of life.

This is the first book in the series, with additional books planned for 1988 and following. Several attractive features include a glossary of terms and an index. Each chapter summarizes the material discussed. This book will challenge both laymen and academics to test their faith in the arena of societal life. It could be valuable for critical examination of current trends on moral and ideological issues for students entering college.

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*Eleanore Klassen is an R.N. and a free-lance writer from Abbotsford, British Columbia.*

During the past two years we have been hearing the phrase "Mission in Christ's Way." Some will recognize this as the second half of the program theme for the 1989 Assembly of the World Council of Church's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism held at San Antonio, Texas, in May. The first half of the theme, "Your Will Be Done," is taken from Matthew 6:10—a phrase omitted by the parallel passage in Luke 11:2—and is a prayer of self-abandonment into the hands of God. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all report that Jesus used this same phrase when in Gethsemane he faced the prospect of death by crucifixion. As Luke puts it, Jesus said, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Coupling the two phrases together clarifies and strengthens the point: God's coming into the world in Jesus Christ was the normative missionary action but the content and means of that act is known only through the example and life of Jesus Christ.

The focus of theological work shifts with the currents of the times. A priority issue of the past decade has been Christology, and this has important consequences for the mission of the church. As goes Christology, so goes the mission. The Unitarian-Universalist movement is noteworthy for its distinctly non-missionary character. God as interpreted through this tradition is a being without saving passion. One cannot, however, confront the fullness of God revealed in Jesus Christ and escape the divine passion.

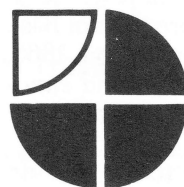
Challenges to Christology are being raised from several angles. Most widely discussed, because it is also the most controversial, is the challenge of religious pluralism. The increased mobility of peoples and extensive migration in the twentieth century has resulted in large numbers of adherents of a wide range of religions moving from their traditional homeland to another part of the world. Until the present century there were scarcely any Muslims in Western Europe. Today the Muslim community makes up the second largest religious group in France, to cite only

one of the more dramatic examples of this widespread change. Whereas a century ago it was assumed that many of the world religions were in decline, today there are signs of resurgence. As Christians in the West have been forced to come to terms with these growing numbers of adherents of other religions, learning to accord to them the same civil rights enjoyed by Christians and Jews, they have had to accept these peoples on equal terms. This inevitably raises the question of the theological meaning of religions. The review essay by Norman Kraus considers the range of responses being made by Christians to this fact of pluralism. The effect of some is to reduce the meaning of God's action in Jesus Christ on behalf of humankind.

The second response to Christology comes from another source, namely, historical experience. It is expressed in several ways. For example, the comment of Mahatma Gandhi is used to indict the Christian movement. Gandhi freely acknowledged his debt to Christ and his teachings but charged Christians with failure to live up to the standards of the Sermon on the Mount. Therefore, Gandhi was willing to acknowledge the greatness of Christ but rejected the Christian faith. Lamin Sanneh has drawn attention to the "Western guilt complex" which afflicts Christians in the West (*Christian Century*, 4/8/87). This paralyzing guilt, based on a flawed reading of the record of Christian performance in the world, has had the effect of diluting the witness to Jesus Christ in the world. We dare not for one moment defend the excesses in zeal or distortions in practice by Christians. The "treasure" is truly in earthen vessels. One of the greatest temptations Christians face is that of crusading for God. It always brings the whole gospel project into grave peril. Yet God has chosen to work within history through frail humans to achieve the divine purpose. To trim our understanding of Jesus Christ to fit into a reduced understanding or as a way of assuaging feelings of guilt is to denature the gospel.

A third reaction is to insist that a classical interpretation or system of work can guarantee a complete understand-

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*A Conference on Education for International Mission and Service took place at Goshen (Ind.) College on May 25-27, 1989. The conference, sponsored by Council of Mennonite Colleges, Council of Mennonite Seminaries, and Council of International Ministries, brought together 125 representatives from Mennonite and Brethren in Christ mission and service agencies and educational institutions. The aim of the conference was to promote dialogue toward a common vision for preparing the next generation of Christians for the global ministry of the church. This Mission Focus issue includes the keynote address, the plenary sessions, synopses of the panel discussions, a summation of the dialogue, and a findings report.*

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## The Word Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us

KOSUKE KOYAMA

"How are we to envision the global ministry of the church over the next several decades? How do we prepare ourselves, our students, our field staff, and our congregations to best fulfill that ministry?"

We are living today in a moment of "reorganization of world history" such as the prophet Jeremiah perceived his age to be, according to the Old Testament scholar Gerhard Von Rad. I will try to describe my theological understanding of the reorganization of world history taking place in our time as a response to the above questions given to me by this conference.

### Theology of two benedictions

Some three decades ago when I was a Japanese missionary to Thailand, Thai Buddhists told me that Christianity teaches people irresponsibility, because it proclaims that Jesus Christ—not the person who made the mess—will clean up the mess. Buddhism, in contrast, teaches that the person who made the mess—not anyone else—must clean it up.

*By oneself, indeed, is evil done; by oneself is one defiled; by oneself is evil left undone; by oneself is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on oneself. No one purifies another* (The Dhammapada, #165).

We may respond to this critical remark in a number of ways. But for our present purpose it will benefit us if we take it as a sharp critique of our all-too-often "cheap grace" Christianity.

A Christianity of cheap grace could not appreciate the insight of James Baldwin, author-philosopher from Harlem in New York City:

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*It is a terrible, an inexorable, law that one cannot deny the humanity of another without diminishing one's own; in the face of one's victim, one sees oneself* (Baldwin 1978:66).

These two quotations, one from Bangkok and the other from New York, thirty years apart as I came to know them, are not from the Bible, the Christian Scripture. I wish to emphasize the importance of the human word. Were there no human words, there could be no communication of the Word of God. Myths and symbols of our creation make communication of the gospel possible. Truths—such as that money should be spent for peace rather than for war, or that the apartheid race policy of South Africa is evil—must be insisted upon and confirmed by both humanity and God. So the Catholic theologian Raimundo Panikkar says that Christian theology must be "theandric." Abraham Lincoln concludes "The Emancipation Proclamation" (1863) with an invocation:

*And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.*

Often it is easier to obtain "the gracious favor of Almighty God" than to get the "considerate judgment of mankind" on weighty human issues! This is amply demonstrated by the privatized Christianity which dominates the television networks in the United States. We have received the commandment: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain" (Exod. 20:7). If we do not take seriously the "considerate judgment of mankind," such as Baldwin's, we would not fully appreciate the gospel, "the gracious favor of Almighty God."

The Bible narrates a dramatic contest between Elijah



and the prophets of the Baal (1 Kings 18:17-40). The triumph of Elijah has extensively influenced the Western-Christian missionary identity. Missionaries have come to Asia as mini-Elijahs, conquering the Asian prophets of Baal. In the language of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1866, *America is the radiating center whence high and ennobling mankind is brightening the radiance of our own piety* (Handy 1983:59).

There are, however, millions of people today who do not explicitly belong either to the Elijah group (religious overzealousness) or the Baal group (fertility cult). This third group is an important portion of humanity which has provided from time to time the "considerate judgment of mankind." Who are the people of the third group? Among them are:

1. The Buddhists (312 million), who are neither the "Elijah" type nor the "Baal" type. They are concerned above all about the destructiveness of human greed.

2. People who advocate the use of nonviolence to violence as a force in society to achieve social justice. They are represented by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., who "scandalously" (1 Cor. 1:23) attest to the invincible power that emanates from being vulnerable.

3. Human rights advocates, from those who wrote the Magna Carta (1512) to the composers of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

4. The people who, embodying the best heritage of the European Enlightenment, gave to the United States its Constitution in 1787 and to postwar Japan its Constitution in 1946. Neither Elijah nor Baal were able to draft a constitution in which government would check its own power.

5. And there are people who are influenced by the classical thoughts of the Buddha and Confucius. Although both the Buddha and Confucius rejected the idea of a supernatural "God" (or "gods") as "confusing and profitless," they were not fools (Ps. 14:1).

The "considerate judgment of mankind" does not approve of Elijah's overkill. He "brought them 450 prophets of the Baal down to the brook Kishon, and killed them there" (1 Kings 18:40). It also opposes the fanaticism of a fertility cult—"cutting themselves" (1 Kings 18:28) of the Baal's prophets. Both contain dangerous seeds of the idolatrous cult of "emperor worship."

"The considerate judgment of mankind" is more likely to come from those who have not participated in the contest between Elijah and the Baal's prophets. In our education for global community we must learn to listen to and nurture the considerate judgments of mankind. The world is replete with inconsiderate judgment of mankind. "They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'peace, peace,' when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). Only when we get below the level of symptoms and go to the roots of social injustice are we able to form in our minds the considerate judgment.

But that is not enough. We must also invoke the gracious favor of almighty God. These two benedictions are inter-related and from the perspective of our human experience are also often interdependent. Our ministry needs two benedictions, one from God and the other from humanity. This may be the way to avoid both Elijah's overzealous overkill and Baal's cult of capitalistic and communistic increase.

World history is being reorganized in our day. Our languages, religions, and cultures are going through a process of unprecedented change. Inevitably some of the great Christian symbols are being challenged as human

intellect and conscience find more assurance in the "two benedictions" than in the "one benediction." Tragically, the militarism and racism that destroy the health of humanity have arisen from the culture of "one benediction" of the "gracious favour of almighty God!" or "God is on our side!" We should remember Professor

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Bainton's warning that "war is more humane when God is left out of it" (1979:49).

### The world in which we live

When we invoke two benedictions we must be intelligently aware of what is happening in our world. "Out of the depths I cry to thee, O Lord!" (Ps. 130:1).

1. Our world has a vast number of people who are displaced, uprooted, and homeless. "Homelessness" is not just a topic for some American cities. It impacts physically and spiritually the whole human society. Christ identifies himself with the homeless. "There was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not" (John 1:11). How do we translate this image of Christ into the language of education for Christian ministry?

2. Rich nations, like rich persons, are getting richer, while poor nations with the poor people are getting poorer. Ever larger numbers of people in the poor nations are suffering from despairing poverty and perishing from malnutrition and hunger: "... they [dominant groups] eat up my people [marginal groups] as they eat bread" (Ps. 14:4). How are we to eliminate this tragic gap between the rich and the poor?

3. Racism is on the ascendancy. Militarism, while attitudes seem to be changing in the world, remains a threat to our welfare. In racism and militarism our "prayer" has been: "God, I thank thee that I am not like other men..." (Luke 18:11). How are we to free ourselves, individually and collectively, from this prayer?

4. Technology (both military and nonmilitary) is used to increase the power of the powerful. The self-serving use of technology will eventually destroy the user. "Their sword [nuclear missiles] shall enter their own heart" (Ps. 37:15). How can we wrest spiritual values from technology of our day? What is the relationship between technology and the human spirit?

5. The earth's biosphere is now clearly and massively threatened by the by-products of human greed. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (Ps. 24:1). How are we to restore a "doxological approach" to creation?

6. Interreligious understanding is important. "In thy light do we see light" (Ps. 36:9). How are we to see the value of other great religious traditions "in thy light"?

We are caught in the time of the reorganization of world history. Some of the central Christian symbols are being redefined today as they are challenged by the disturbing questions I have just listed.

### Symbols that are being challenged

#### Biblical symbols

**Symbol of Noah's ark.** In 1969 the crew of the Apollo-11 spacecraft took a color picture of our planet earth. We are the first generation of humankind to see our own planet from space—to see an earthrise instead of a moonrise!

We may mention two reasons why the symbol of the ark, as a vessel of safety and salvation, is being challenged.

1. In the scriptures of the great religions we find humanity divided between the saved and the condemned. In the Bible the saved are placed in the ark and the unsaved drown in the water outside. We encounter a classical expression of this theology in the medieval Bull, "Unam Sanctam" of Pope Boniface VIII:

*For at the time of deluge there existed only one ark, the figure of the one Church. . . . And we read that all things*

*existing upon the earth outside this ark perished* (Pope Boniface VIII 1302).

The symbol of an ark is dramatic and inspiring, but it is troublesome since it inevitably suggests that "I am in" and "you are out." To say this is self-righteous. For many centuries Christian mission has suffered from such a subtle and sometimes outright self-righteousness. Christians seem to have felt a secure sense of salvation only when they can see "non-Christians" drowning en masse (Luke 15:28). In 1917 Walter Rauschenbusch wrote,

*To be afraid of hell or purgatory and desirous of a life without pain or trouble in heaven was not in itself Christian. It was self-interest on a higher level* (1917:108).

2. One of the most soul-searching comments on this point comes from Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the author of *The Gulag Archipelago*:

*Evidently evil-doing also has a threshold magnitude. Yes, a human being hesitates and bobs back and forth between good and evil all his life. He slips, falls back, clambers up, repents, things begin to darken again. But just so long as the threshold of evil-doing is not crossed, the possibility of returning remains, and he himself is still within reach of our hope. But when, through the density of evil actions, the result either of their own extreme degree or of the absoluteness of his power, he suddenly crosses that threshold, he has left humanity behind, and without, perhaps, the possibility of return* (1974, Part I:175).

Solzhenitsyn must be thinking of Stalin. It is possible, according to him, for a person to cross the threshold of morality and leave humanity behind. Such a person can do immense damage to humanity. To say that he is not in the ark of salvation has little meaning. In the face of the murder of six million Jews it does not make sense to say that Hitler is outside the ark drowning.

Our planet itself is the ark. Take a good look at the earth navigating in the infinite ocean of the universe! Our ecumenism and missiology must assume a global and ecological character. Here the Baldwin principle works in a grand scale: what we do to the earth, we do to ourselves!

And what we are presently doing to this marvelous biosphere is murderous. Gerald O. Barney of the Institute for 21st-Century Studies tells us:

*In brief what I have to tell you is this: For the first time in history of the creation, the life support systems of the Planet Earth are being destroyed by human activities. Throughout history humans have caused locally significant damage to the environment, but never before have human numbers and actions combined to threaten the integrity of the entire planet* (Barney 1989).

The picture of our planet is that of a wounded planet. We are crucifying the earth, and thus demonstrating how we despise the Creator of the earth. Is this what St. Paul refers to in an eschatological vision? "... The whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now" (Rom. 8:22). Again to quote Barney:

*As I look ahead a generation or two, I see two possibilities for Planet Earth. In one possibility the Earth is hotter, floods and droughts are frequent, and sunlight is life-threatening. Four-fifths of the population lives in hopeless poverty. Huge human migrations occur as massive areas of once-fertile lands degrade steadily into wastelands. . . .*

*The other possibility is a world in which protection of the life support systems of the Earth has become a top priority in every nation. Brilliant minds and budget dollars have been transferred from designing and build-*

*ing weapons to devising ways to obtain more welfare and benefit from every ounce of resources used. . . . Human ignorance, poverty, and bigotry are recognized everywhere as primary threats to national security and the future of the Earth (Barney 1989).*

Theological education must aim to foster the second possibility. If we kill the earth, we kill ourselves—all of us. "In the face of the victim, we see ourselves." We must see the wisdom in the Buddhist teaching: "Purity and impurity depend on oneself." If our theology is guided by the idea of sheep (saved, inside the ark) and goats (condemned, in the water drowning) we need a serious theological rethinking in terms of the picture taken of this planet in 1969. Matthew's story of judgment (25:31-46) must be interpreted ethically, not metaphysically. Then what is the relationship between salvation and ethics? What is the ethical content of Christian sacrament?

**Symbol of "Exodus."** The image of "Exodus" is powerful and enduring. The people of Israel suffered under the brutally exploitative policy of Egypt.

*I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians (Exod. 3:7).*

This is the foundation passage for Liberation Theology. Here salvation is achieved by "coming out" of Egypt. This is indeed an awe-inspiring religious and political symbol.

Yet, salvation cannot be portrayed only in terms of "coming out" of troubled situations. Biblical theology suggests another image of "staying in." "The word became flesh and dwelt among us." "... And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8). Why did not Israel stay in Egypt and try to reform the Egyptian society from inside? Is "coming out"—"Let my people go!"—a solution? Yes, it is. But not always. What happens to the country left behind? Abandoned? How can Israel be saved when Egypt is condemned?

*In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage" (Isa. 19:24-25).*

The Indian theologian Stanley Samartha writes these critical words:

*Now, tell me Moses,/ In order to liberate your people/ was it necessary to kill/ All our firstborn baby boys,/ Including my own? (1987:14).*

And perhaps we may ask a question in the same vein: "Now tell me, Joshua,/ In order to settle your people/ was it necessary to kill so many people/ in the land of Canaan?"/ "Exodus" results in "Inodus." Whether "coming out" or "staying in," the end result is that we must learn to live in and reform unjust societies to become just. Jeremiah suggests this possibility when he sent a "staying in" word to the people exiled in Babylon:

*But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare (Jer. 29:7).*

Spiritual life of the United States would have been different if the nation had taken the advice of Jeremiah instead of Joshua vis-à-vis the native Indian population. The theological significance of the "coming out" should not be separated from the message of "staying in." This tension demonstrates the remarkable spiritual dynamism of the Bible. In this sense the symbol of Exodus is

challenged. I would suggest that the "staying in" is more Christologically significant than the "coming out."

**Symbol of "God the Father."** In the past three decades, feminist theology has made a remarkable contribution by calling our attention to the feminine quality of the biblical image of God.

*For a long time I have held my peace, I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in travail, I will gasp and pant (Isa. 42:14).*

*Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you (Isa. 49:15).*

In the 11th Council of Toledo (675) we read this remarkable expression: "We must believe that the Son is begotten or born from the womb of the Father."

Feminist theologians suggest such alternatives to the Trinitarian formula as "The Creator, The Redeemer, and The Comforter," "Giver, Gift, and Holy Ghost" to avoid a "sexist" word "Father" when applied to God. The feminist theological debates touch upon the very nature of theological language itself.

The challenge posed by feminist theology is indeed controversial, but at least it is expanding and enriching the biblical image of God, not only for women but for all of us. In this sense, it is authentic. No one is allowed to "pass by on the other side."

#### *Cultural-theological symbols*

**Symbol of "white" God.** Nowhere does the Bible define that God is "white." God transcends color just as God transcends genders. Yet God (Jesus Christ) has been thought of as a white God (Jesus Christ) reflecting the self-identity of the historically dominant white race.

Black theology emancipates the image of God from this racial (often racist) captivity just as feminist theology frees the image of God from sexist limitation. The difference between the two is this: God created male and female, and thus this distinction is rooted in the original intention of the Creator, while it is never said that God created black person and white person. The distinction between male and female is fundamental, while that of white and black is not.

Black theology asserts that God is with the oppressed. A certain section of humanity, having black skin, has been consistently oppressed. Therefore God is specially concerned about the welfare of, and suffers together with, the black people. In this sense of solidarity, black theology tells us that God is "black."

Black theology speaks powerfully and carefully for all the minority groups in the world. Doing so it calls our attention to a central theme of the biblical tradition: deal kindly with the marginal people of a community.

*If you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers for ever (Jer. 7:6-7).*

Periphery assumes central significance. This must become the fundamental orientation for our educational effort.

**Symbol of "Enemy."** In 1976 George F. Kennan wrote: *Observing then, in the years of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the seemingly inexorable advance of this hysteria of professed fear of and hostility to the Soviet Union, but finding so little objective reason for it, I could only suspect that its origins were primarily subjective; and this seemed to me to suggest something much more*



*sinister than mere intellectual error: namely, a subconscious need on the part of a great many people for an external enemy—an enemy against whom frustrations could be vented, an enemy who could serve as a convenient target for the externalization of evil, an enemy in whose allegedly inhuman wickedness one could see the reflection of one's own exceptional virtue* (1982:xxii).

Humanity has reached the point of spiritual hallucination, psychological exhaustion, and financial ruination after forty years of the global cold war. Both in Christian America and atheist Soviet Union the idea that "we have an enemy that threatens our existence" has been supreme. Our knees are bent, and we pay obeisance to the idol named "we have an enemy out there." In the case of the Christian America the excitement of "having an enemy" usurped the blessedness of having a God. The superpowers poured staggering resources into armaments in the face of humanity's unfulfilled basic needs. The murderously sophisticated arms technology advances continuously. We have perfected the art of destruction.

What is this mysterious "enemy" that can elicit such a tremendous spiritual concentration and doxology from our souls? Why can an idea of enemy give us such a strong self-identity? The secret is that we need "an enemy in whose allegedly inhuman wickedness one could see the reflection of one's own exceptional virtue." How long can humanity upon this "tiny planet" survive with this idea of having an enemy?

Reinhold Niebuhr writes:

*The guiltless one would expiate the guilt of the guilty; and that would be the only way of ending the chain of evil in history. . . . This suffering of the guiltless one was to become in Christian faith a revelation of God's own suffering. . . . To make suffering love rather than power the final expression of sovereignty was to embody the perplexity of history into the solution* (1949:161).

The idea of "having an enemy" and the fact that this idea is important for our much needed self-identity produces a "chain of evil in history." It is the suffering of the guiltless that can break this chain of evil. Theology must not be built upon the idea of having an enemy, but on God's sovereignty of suffering love. Christianity is the most radical demonstration of this truth. "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Does the crucified one—the one who is utterly peripheralized—have "enemy?" "Love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44).

**Symbol of linear progression of history.** "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 21:6). This great confession of faith does not have to imply that the line between the beginning and the end is "straight linear." The Bible suggests that God's relationship with humanity is not as "efficient" as the image of straight line suggests. The time between the beginning and the end could be circular, pendulum, and even zigzag. The "straight linear" image of progression of history may have become so attractive to our culture because of the imperialistic ethos of the past 400 years—for instance, manifest destiny or the book *The Christian Conquest of China*. When we talk about the straight line, we are not talking about Christian theology; we are talking about imperialism. Christian eschatology is different from a manifest destiny doctrine or just bulldozing others to go our way. It is rooted more in our ideology (the zigzag of Babel) than in theology (the Pentecost).

The love (*hesed, agape*) of God, so fully expressed in

the scandalous event of the crucified Christ, cannot be conveyed in such an efficient image as a straight line.

*Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things* (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

Love of God can express itself in all kinds of time schemes. The Ugandan theologian John Mbiti says that Africans have a weak sense of future, but a strong sense of what is happening in the present. They have an event-focused view of history. History for them moves in a pendulum fashion between present time in which events take place (*sasa*) and a big bag, as it were, into which time goes back after it "evented" (*zamani*). Human experiences housed in the *zamani* come out to help as we live in the *sasa* time. The Hindus and Greeks think that "history" circles. The view of history native to Japanese people is focused on the idea of "continuity" ("next-next"). Westerners think history moves in a linear fashion toward the goal. The message of the love of God can be conveyed through any of these. It is this message which is important, and the value of the forms of history must be subordinated to this message. Christian eschatology must be distinguished from our own imperialism. "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

The idea of linear progression of history influenced our view of "universality" of Christianity. But the Christian concept of universality is sacramental. Christ became universal when he broke his body and poured his blood for our sake. In his self-denial (*kenosis*) he becomes universal (Phil. 2:4-11). In the words of Isaiah, he became universal when "he was despised and rejected" by people and when "he was wounded for our transgressions" (53:3-5). In him universality is separated from spiritual and political imperialism. Not the image of a shepherd who has all one hundred sheep in the fold, but that of a shepherd who seeks one that is lost depicts the Christian image of universality. Spirituality of Christian mission must be formed by this universality of Christ. In this theology of universality of Christ we are moved to say: "We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty" (Luke 17:10).

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# Educational Vision in Global Context

JAMES C. JUHNKE

## Founding visions

Nearly a hundred years ago at the dawn of a new century, our founding parents set North American Mennonite higher education in motion with a burst of expansive envisioning. On February 11, 1896, John S. Coffman of Elkhart, Indiana, the dean of "old" Mennonite evangelists, delivered the founding address of the Elkhart Institute. He bought a new suit for the auspicious occasion, a purchase which, he wrote in his diary, "I very much needed" (Coffman 1964:289).

Coffman entitled his address "The Spirit of Progress." Progress, he said, was "advancement toward a higher or better state, as in civilization." It included technological, intellectual, and moral dimensions. The "Spirit of Progress" accounted for invention of the telegraph as well as for religious insights of men such as Hans Denck and Menno Simons. Although the "Spirit of Progress" was not continuous or uninterrupted throughout history, and although Coffman qualified his praise of progress with more sober Mennonite teachings, he acclaimed for his own time the virtual elimination of international war:

*Man has ceased to rob and slay his fellow man, not because he is powerless or because he cannot find him, but because he has no longer any desire to do so. The husbandman can now enjoy the fruits of his labors because he need not spend his whole time in fortifying and defending himself against those who would still be enemies were it not for the progress of civilization"* (Coffman 1896:51).

Four years later, on June 19, 1900, Noah C. Hirschy, a youthful pastor of Wadsworth, Ohio, addressed a crowd at the cornerstone laying for Mennonite Central School at Bluffton, Ohio. Hirschy set forth a progressive vision even more encompassing than Coffman's. "Let our life blood flow into this college," said Hirschy, "and life will flow out from it for the healing of the nations."

*The Cubans and the Filipinos are not yet free; the Boers are next door neighbors to slaves; India is starving, and China is in turmoil. These wrongs must be righted, governments must become submissive to the inevitable, and must become servants of the people. . . . Let this be an institution from which shall go forth men and women who shall be the "light of the world" . . . let there go forth men to plead at the bar, to sit in governors' chairs, to serve as ambassadors to foreign lands. . . . Men also full of the spirit of God, leaders in every reform, teachers of divine truth who will make penitentiaries to crumble from disuse, and will help to hurl the last liquor demon into the bottomless pit* (Hirschy 1900).

Coffman and Hirschy's rhetoric, of course, reflected times now known as the "Progressive Era." We find a similar expansiveness and a linking of education and overseas mission in Henry W. Lohrentz and Cornelius H. Wedel, of Tabor College and Bethel College in Kansas. Lohrentz and Wedel chaired their denominational mission boards along with their college presidencies (Toews 1983:11-19; Juhnke 1987). These men stood at the beginning of an era of Mennonite denomination building—a time for founding colleges, hospitals, mission societies,

church conferences, and other organizations. They envisioned a future of confident progress.

## Continuities

The task for this paper is to examine the "vision statements" of eleven Mennonite North American liberal arts colleges, Bible colleges, and biblical seminaries for their international themes. These schools vary widely in form and function. Their "vision statements" included catalog copy, course syllabi, and promotional brochures. Analysis of this diverse material must necessarily be impressionistic, implying more unity than in fact is present. One is likely to find exceptions somewhere in this material to any generalizations made about the whole. And one must always be aware of the gap between stated vision and accomplished reality. As early as 1894 Cornelius H. Wedel wrote, "In some catalogs the schools extol their superiority beyond any modesty whatever" (Wedel 1894:2-3).

## Global vision

Mennonite schools today do indeed vigorously envision a mission of international dimension, as did the progressive founders a century ago. Our vision statements commit us to the goal of embracing people and issues beyond local and national parochialism. We want to send forth students who are aware of the wider world and who are equipped to serve in it. We have shaped our general education requirements, as well as many advanced elective courses and experiences, to meet this goal.

We use different concepts to express this interest. Three root words the college statements use most often are "nation," "globe," and "culture." The word "international," (as in "international studies") reminds us that we live in a world of nation states. The word "global" implies totality and interdependence, especially when linked with the concept of village, as in "global village." The word "cultural," as in "cross-cultural" or "multicultural studies," suggests the folkways and artifacts of human communities.

While our vision statements speak easily of nation, globe, and culture, we have shifted away from other concepts we once favored. For example, we have virtually abandoned the concept of "world" as a moral opposite of the church, a meaning of considerable power for our forebears. We seem to be fleeing from a discredited church/world dualism, and so our vision statements seldom name the world as world. Another word largely set aside, especially by the liberal arts colleges, is "kingdom." Our vision statements are not inclined to see our global calling in terms of kingdom-building. Some may find this a welcome liberation from the language of patriarchy and monarchy. Others may see a lamentable secularization and departure from the language of the Bible.

The Mennonite colleges and seminaries do articulate an impressive global vision. But is it strong enough to claim distinctiveness among North American schools? I do not have information from comparable schools to make a judgment. William C. Ringenberg of Taylor College recently wrote a history of Protestant higher education in America that listed the traits in "the emerging identity of the modern Christian college" (1984:195-6). Global-con-

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sciousness was not on the list. Ernest L. Boyer, in his Carnegie Foundation study for the Advancement of Teaching, reported that American college efforts for "international education" peaked in the 1950s and declined thereafter (1987:228). Nicholas Wolterstorff, in an address at Wheaton College, called for a Christian college "much more international in its concerns and consciousness than any of our colleges is at present" (1988:44). Mennonite schools are probably ahead of comparable institutions in global-consciousness.

### *College and church*

The vision statements of Mennonite colleges strongly emphasize their rootage in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and their connection to the Mennonite church. This ongoing commitment of church-relatedness is notable in a North American context where a prevailing historical pattern has been for denominational colleges to gradually abandon their original church identity and commitments. Our churches have undergone major changes in this century. Where an earlier generation related to a church constituency in which many opposed higher education in principle, our colleges relate to church members who are often not sure why a Mennonite college should be preferred over a secular public school.

Not quite two decades ago the Mennonite Church (MC) produced a number of significant studies of the philosophy and theology of Mennonite Christian education that may have had some salutary effect in linking with our faith tradition and in projecting a future. These studies, drafted by Ross Bender (1971), Daniel Hertzler (1971), and Harold Bauman (1972), all emphasized the church and mission context of education. While it is unclear whether these studies had a direct impact upon college planning, they at least provide a benchmark for assessing continuity.

Today we make our professions of church-relatedness in the face of massive secularization. Our student bodies are increasingly pluralistic and include increasing percentages of members of other faith traditions. We have become dependent upon government funding for student financial aid and support of other kinds. For example, the Service Education Program of our Canadian schools responds to the "Lordship of Christ," but it is "made possible by financial assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency." Our church-related identities may be affirmed as strategies for survival or as winsome claims to moral identity in a world hungry for moral anchors. But the connection to worldwide Mennonitism is surely a major advantage in reaching beyond our local and national borders.

### *Service*

No concept is more strongly emphasized in our vision statements than that of service. We believe in education for service, culture for service, study and service. A subtle distinction might be made between references to "servanthood," a concept which implies following the image of Christ, and references to just "service," a concept which has popular coinage in secular society as well. Our references to service do not necessarily make us distinctive in a world of military service, health services, community services, and service industries.

The very popularity of the term "service" in both church and world may contain certain dangers for us. We use the terms in widely differing ways. At one level we say that Mennonite college education is preparation for service,

that our schools impart a global-consciousness that will enhance the contribution of our graduates at home and overseas. The presence of international students at our colleges is an important part of this objective. We prepare students for service.

At another level, we claim to do service now. We say that our schools provide "service experiences" that earn educational credits toward graduation. These educational "service experiences" are necessarily short-term, nontechnical, nonspecialized, and limited in the extent to which the receivers of the service can be meaningfully involved in setting priorities and establishing program. Today the international service and development agencies are increasingly insisting that the real need is for qualified service specialists in international nutrition, health, agriculture, and other fields. Are we sure that short-term liberal arts students really provide credible service? Are our college curricula really amenable to the kinds of multilateral international involvement which mission agencies today are calling for?

Nevertheless, the emphasis upon service is something that links us to our heritage of discipleship and mission. We must seek to keep the link strong and not debase the coinage of the concept "service."

### **Discontinuities**

I have suggested that in our statements the themes of global vision, church-relatedness, and service provide links of continuity with the dreams of our founders a century ago. We now turn to some other themes that suggest more discontinuity.

### *Progress*

Our greatest discontinuity with men such as John Coffman and Noah Hirschy is that we no longer have confidence in human progress. As editor Robert Schrag wrote in a recent issue of *Mennonite Weekly Review*, "...events of the 20th century—especially the era's brutal wars—shattered the hope of many in the perfectibility of humanity through education" (May 1989:4). American historians carry on an endless debate about the proper dating of the so-called "end of American innocence" (May 1959). Was it before or after World War I that the holistic integrated belief in progress, culture, and moral values came apart at the seams? For progressive Mennonites, enthusiastic latecomers to the American denominational scene that we were, the loss of confidence came somewhat later. We might locate our transition in the cultural upheaval of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Whenever the watershed, we cannot doubt that it happened. Our college vision statements from the 1980s, winsome and upbeat though they earnestly strive to be, do not testify to confidence in global human progress.

### *Community*

We are additionally separated from our progressive founders by our eroded capacity to envision the *communities* in which we expect our internationally sensitized graduates to make their contribution. The founding generation did not doubt the communal coherence of the Mennonite settlements, as well as of the world that was to be served. One task of Mennonite higher education was to produce missionaries for domestic and foreign service. And the task of missionaries was to create and nourish Christian communities of worship and work around the world, communities whose essential character would duplicate the solid



and stable life typical of rural Mennonitism. Our vision statements today speak of "international development," but we do not project a convincing image of what a developed community means.

Cornelius H. Wedel, founding president of Bethel College, embraced the concept of "Christendom" to define his communal ideal for Mennonite education. Wedel's vision was for a counter-Christendom, over against the Christendom of popes and emperors, made manifest in local congregations. In Wedel's words, our ideal was "Gemeindechristenthum"—literally "congregation Christendom." One purpose of higher education was to extend and to enlarge the boundaries of the "Gemeindechristenthum" at home and in the foreign world, the "Heidenwelt," or "heathen world." Today the language of Christendom and heathendom are unfashionable and offensive. We speak a more pluralistic and individualistic language.

One might expect that the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, with its emphasis on the church as a body of believers, would produce a strong emphasis upon community. Insofar as our college vision statements focus upon the idea of a "global village" or "global community," the idea of world as community is present in some all-encompassing sense. But our vision statements reveal another pattern that may be even more significant. We tend to reserve the concept of "community" more concretely for the life on our own campuses. The college itself (rather than the church) is community. According to our current rhetoric, our colleges are communities where students come to have enriching experiences. We hope these experiences will equip and inspire students to serve. But we tend not to conceive of our graduates' places of future service as communities, either as communities of the church or as communities of the world.

We speak of student life beyond college in terms of individual "careers." A career represents a choice among options, and we expect that our graduates will exercise several career options in a lifetime. Fading is the language of international missionary service as a sacrificial calling from God, a calling whose abandonment would raise serious questions in the sending community. As Mennonite colleges adopt the language and assumptions of career preparation, we are accommodating in yet one more way to American individualism. One suspects that Mennonites, like other Americans, reflect the same forces that so distressed Robert Bellah in *Habits of the Heart*—an increasing difficulty in conceiving life's activities as integrated in morally meaningful community (1985:50).

### Culture

H. Richard Niebuhr in his book *Christ and Culture* saddled us in the Anabaptist tradition with the label "Christ Against Culture" (1951). Mennonite liberal arts colleges surely cannot accept Niebuhr's label, for we are committed to excellence in the academic disciplines that explore and express our cultural heritage. However, if Niebuhr were to evaluate Mennonite college vision statements, he would probably observe that Mennonite colleges are generally lacking in positive affirmations of a mission for broad cultural development at home and overseas. Do our colleges have a cultural mission to prepare students to improve the quality of life in the world through the best of human language, literature, science, art, and music? If so, we have not found ways to express this mission convincingly in our vision statements. We speak much

more readily of service, peace, and justice than we speak of the true, the beautiful, and the good. The mission in the world for our graduates who have achieved true excellence in the liberal arts is not well articulated.

### The challenge

In the decade of the 1990s our challenge is to maintain continuity with our heritage of global mission and service, while creatively adapting and borrowing the best from the world in which we dream and work. We look back at John S. Coffman and Noah C. Hirschy, and we smile at their innocent borrowings. How mistaken they were to acclaim a warless world when the Spanish-American War and the rise of American imperialism were on the horizon. But let us not forget that our own borrowings are massive and often quite indiscriminate. I will close with two examples that illustrate the dilemma of maintaining Anabaptist-Mennonite identity in a competitive free-enterprise society.

Both Bethel College and Goshen College have produced vision statements (of a sort) in the form of sophisticated, glossy, multicolored promotional brochures. These brochures are designed to hook popular interest in the highly competitive market of potential students. The Bethel "view book" introduces the college in general; the Goshen brochure speaks specifically of international education. Both are highly professional documents, very attractive and well done. It is apparent that both were created by people convinced that two concepts, "Mennonite" and "church," are not attractive in this market. The reader looking for "Mennonite" and "church" will have to look hard to find them in the small print on the back pages. I have said above that the Mennonite schools are all clearly and intentionally Mennonite church related. But literature such as this tells another story, one of teaching "each student maturity and flexibility for successful careers and rich personal lives." Is it possible that such market-driven media will eventually become our message?

Despite the tensions and contradictions inherent in Mennonite education for international mission and service, I remain convinced that the resources of our heritage and the richness of our denominational life and institutions today, leave us poised for significant work and witness. The traditional Anabaptist-Mennonite emphases upon church, discipleship, peace, and mission are directly relevant to the malaise of our narcissistic and anxious society. I join with one of our denominational dreamers, Albert J. Meyer, who wrote some years ago, "Let us still hope for the day when the Holy Spirit will break forth in power and the very structures and fundamental objectives of our institutions will be shaped into forms that reflect more adequately our best Christian insights" (Meyer 1962:4).

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## Global Mission in the 1990s

JOHN A. LAPP

Leon P. Spencer, in a recent article emphasizing the Kenya experience, documents anew the cozy relationships of some missions with colonial authorities. Observing that some mission societies were vulnerable to governmental biases, he quoted a letter of Sir Edward Northey to Lord Milner who favored the Church Missionary Society over "loosely constituted societies with loosely defined religious views." Spencer suggests these might have been "the Mennonites and Seventh-Day Adventists" (Spencer 1989:122).

This paper emerges from the vision of one group of these "loosely constituted societies with loosely defined religious views." My interest is threefold: the vision for mission, the context of mission, and the style of mission.

### Vision: "Gaining ground for God"

The Christian story is missionary. The Bible in both Old and New Testaments describes the great moments of grace as occasions for celebration and witness. The apostle Paul summarizes mission in a classic way: "God was in Christ reconciling" and "gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19). Or in Jesus' words, "As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). Mission, hence, is to continue the process God initiated in the call of Abraham, embodied in the community God created through the covenant as "a light to the nations," focused in the revelation of Jesus, whose life and death demonstrated the compassionate heart of the universe, expanded to the present by the witness of the church announcing in every century that reconciliation with God was, is, and will be.

Mission is the *announcement* that the kingdom of God is at hand, the divine order of shalom has begun; mission is the *invitation* to all people to eternal life, the true reality available to all by faith in the Christ; mission is the

*explanation* of the Pauline secret, to help all people "see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God" (Eph. 4:9); mission is the *expression* of God's purpose, restoring that which has been broken and alienated and bringing into being the intended wholeness.

Several years ago John Howard Yoder preached a sermon on "God, the Embattled Partisan." One of the phrases he used, "gaining ground for God," illuminates in a provocative way the Christian mission (Yoder 1984). This phrase can provide a focus and unity for the many facets of our work. I like to envision mission: (1) as gaining ground through living in a godly way, the testimony of the Old Order traditionalists among us; (2) as gaining ground through the accession of new adherents, the important ministry of evangelism; (3) as gaining ground through the nurture of younger people into lives of discipleship, education as mission; (4) as gaining ground through the creation of new communities of commitment, the earmark of the modern missionary movement; (5) as gaining ground by demonstrating compassion to the victims, the marginalized, and powerless people of the world; (6) as gaining ground by joining the debate in the public square on the meaning of peace and justice for cities, nations, and the environment; (7) as gaining ground through "the penetration of meaning" for cultures in disarray, one way of bringing "all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" (Eph. 1:10) (Cragg 1977:100). Mission, thus, is intrinsic to people of faith and comprehensive, involving every activity and resource.

I do not rank these seven in any order of priority. Each is essential to the fulfillment of the task. None is adequate by itself. Lesslie Newbigin does provide a succinct but comprehensive statement of mission when in a recent article he calls us to a better formulation of our task. "The central question is not 'How shall I be saved?' but 'How shall I glorify God by understanding, loving, and doing God's will—here and now in this earthly life?'" The answer, he adds, is in a second question: "How and where

is God's purpose for the whole of creation and the human family made visible and credible?" (Newbigin 1989:54).

The mission and service agencies make explicit in their work that which should be implicit in the life of every follower of Christ, in every congregation of the faithful. The agencies are given the tasks that congregations and conferences believe ought to be done but which require the corporate discerning of God's will in our time and the pooling of resources.

Our vision for the 1990s begins with this imperative of mission—to gain ground for God. We do this as a peoplehood created as a result of God's reaching out. We continue to reach out as God was in Christ reaching out. Our vision is embodied in a community and a tradition. We believe there is something in the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ voice that is faithful to the biblical message that continues to be relevant for the 1990s. Our vision looks forward in hope when the history of all peoples and nations will be fulfilled, when all things will be made new "in a new heaven and new earth" (2 Pet. 3:13), when "every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord" (Phil. 2:10).

### Time: "You yourselves must watch out"

The Bible is very time-conscious. The apostle Paul noted that Jesus came "in the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4). Jesus himself told the disciples to "watch out" and lamented that in Jerusalem they "did not recognize God's moment when it came" (Luke 19:44). In apocalyptic times he urges us to be alert, be on guard (Mark 13:5, 9, 23).

Our assignment is the 1990s. It is important and appropriate to discern the direction of things. But at this juncture I am somewhat hesitant to be too futuristic. First, it is remarkable how little we really foresee. Howard Zinn some months ago observed that "as this century draws to a close . . . what leaps out from that history has been its utter unpredictability" (Zinn 1988:10). He cites such unforeseen developments as the OPEC control of oil prices a decade ago, the coming of AIDS, and the more recent transformations of the Soviet Union. Eric Hobsbawm ends *The Age of Empire* saying, "The only certain thing about the future is that it will surprise even those who have seen farthest into it" (Hobsbawm 1989:340).

A second hesitancy is a concern about the way the year 2000 is being used as a gimmick by many mission societies with expanded plans for evangelizing the world in the next decade (Barrett and Reapsome, 1988). It is somewhat ironic that when planning is in increasing ill repute—one person calls twentieth-century planning "a history of broken promises"—that many Christian groups appear to be captivated by designing the future. While on the one hand we rightly need to understand the times, on the other hand we also need some of Leopold Von Ranke's realism in the dictum of a century ago that "each generation lives equidistant from eternity."

A third hesitancy was reflected so well in the report of an MCC volunteer in El Salvador. In the midst of the war zone Susan Classen observed the fragility of life and the need to celebrate its beauty. She then added, "I find myself frequently praying for the grace to let go so that the uncertainties of the future will not cloud the beauty of the present" (MCC 1989).

Yet, with God's grace, there will be a future. The historian is not inclined to see sharp breaks in the contours of history. So if we want to understand the 1990s we ought to study

the 1980s and many previous decades. Some of the main forces of our time will continue to dominate the news of the 1990s: the ever-present threat of nuclear destruction now being joined by the possibility of environmental catastrophe; the increasing lopsidedness of the world's economic situation; the declining balances in the world food account and the threat of more frequent moments of starvation; the rapidly growing influence of technology in production, transport, services, and knowledge.

As I ponder the 1990s, the opening paragraphs of the UNICEF report, *State of the World's Children 1989*, provide a bleak and foreboding future:

*For almost nine hundred million people, approximately one sixth of mankind, the march of human progress has now become a retreat. In many nations, development is being thrown into reverse. And after decades of steady economic advance, large areas of the world are sliding backwards into poverty.*

*Throughout most of Africa and much of Latin America, average incomes have fallen by 10% to 25% in the 1980s. The average weight-for-age of young children, a vital indicator of normal growth, is falling in many of the countries for which figures are available. In the 37 poorest nations, spending per head on health has been reduced by 50%, and on education by 25% over the last few years. And in almost half of the 103 developing countries from which recent information is available, the proportion of 6-to-11 year olds enrolled in primary school is now falling.*

*In other words, it is children who are bearing the heaviest burden of debt and recession in the 1980s. And in tragic summary, it can be estimated that at least half a million young children have died in the last 12 months as a result of the slowing down or the reversal of progress in the developing world* (Grand 1989:1-2).

So what time is it for Christian mission in the 1990s? Seven themes leap out.

1. The growing sense of inadequacy, the failure of nerve, the exhaustion of modern ideologies in the face of enormous environmental, political, technological, social, and economic problems. The future appears more dangerous and less secure. One of the key phrases describing institutions for the 1990s will surely be "the crisis of legitimacy," most evident now in Eastern Europe, the USSR, and China, but no continent will be exempt.

2. The waning power and influence of the USSR and the USA and the corresponding growth of power and influence by East Asia and the European Economic Community, neither of whom are presently hobbled by imperial obligations.

3. The tremendous growth of cities on all continents and the inability of governing authorities to provide essential services amidst rising expectations. For the first time in human history more people on planet Earth will be living in cities than in rural villages. Moshe Lewin makes a very strong case that the primary force impacting change in the USSR is the dramatic shift in the population base to the city that in turn led to a new civil society (Lewin 1988, chs. 2-3). Multiply this dozens of times for countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

4. The interconnection and interdependence of the entire world. We have seen it coming and participated in this growing reality. But it is the 80s and 90s when it is becoming clear that major historical processes have a global context. Some writers talk of "deterritorialization" with the massive movement of people northward, west-



ward, and eastward. All societies are clearly multi-ethnic. A monocultural view of reality is surely no longer relevant, if it ever was.

5. A profound yearning for meaning which often emphasizes traditional religious authority, fundamentalisms, or generates new religious entities. Harold Turner says, "The world has never seen more religious innovation and creativity than in the second half of the present century" (Wood 1989:8). The competitive nature of the major world religions is surely heightening. The overload of modernity has engendered widespread frustration, disorientation, and helplessness.

6. The growing reality of the world church present on all continents. The center of numerical gravity is shifting from North and West to South and East at the same time as European and North American mainline denominations lose their role of cultural leadership.

7. The discovery that the center of numerical gravity for the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ world community is also shifting, exposing as never before the great disparities in wealth and power between the Germanics and North Asians versus South Asians, Africans, and Latins.

In summary, what lies ahead is the continued decline of the European-American dominance. The 1990s will be time when we North Americans will finally realize that indeed "progress is the last superstition," to use Christopher Lasch's words. One of our big tasks will be to help people deal with decline and recession, to cope with adversity and survival. At the same time there is a corresponding growth of globalization, "a world process . . . that relates all local and immediate contexts of whatever description to new common realities." Or as Norman Cousins puts it: "The big news of the 21st century will be that the world as a whole has to be managed and not just its parts" (Cousins 1987:38). Max Stackhouse goes on to describe the meaning of this for the church.

*Christianity now faces world religions that are deeper, richer, and broader than any that it has previously encountered (or developed). Further, Christianity now confronts cultures and civilizations which have also developed complex systems of philosophy, law, technology, and science that have been—in shaping people's minds, societies, and natural environments—as powerful and pervasive as any in world history. The question is whether, in such a moment, a cosmopolitan apologia is possible. Christianity faces again the old question in the presence of new pluralisms: Why should anyone believe it? (Stackhouse 1989:160).*

#### Style: "Mission in Christ's Way"

Will Campbell has a wonderful little novella entitled *Cecelia's Sin* (Campbell 1983:43, 47, 80-82). The main character, Cecelia, was a 16th-century Dutch Anabaptist. In the midst of great persecution Cecelia catches the vision that she ought to write down the stories of the martyrs. She goes about this with great enterprise preserving in *Martyrs Mirror* style the names, addresses, and character of the death of each person. It was a risky business, for if the list were captured it would expose the fledgling movement to even more tyranny. Her friends assisted as "she stitched the worded quilt piece by piece, as if convinced that it would be the one to thaw the icy bed of falsehood and tyranny upon which they lay."

A new person fleeing the authorities, Jacob Cool, entered her hideout one day. Cecelia tried to get his story but he remonstrated: "There are things more important

than your project. . . . It is God who must be honored, not our honor which must be honored. . . . The telling of the story is not the story."

Cecelia eventually had to face up to the inevitable captors. In order not to endanger the lives of many, she began to realize that her writing had become an obsession. As she burned the records, she recalled Jacob Cool's reminder that "writing the story is not the story. I am not the story. I am a part of the telling of the story. Nothing more. Nothing." She also decided that the story was not possessed by an individual but expressed by the group. "Until we came together we knew the words, now we know the tune."

Each of us have some Cecelia in us. We are sure we have a handle on the truth, and our own approach to mission is the correct one. In our age of "management by objectives" and numerous technological devices, these become additional parts of an arsenal for telling the story. Tactics have sometimes become the strategy. Strategy sometimes overwhelms the story.

Yet there is the need for strategy—perhaps not so much in goals and objectives as in style and format. The current theme of World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, "Mission in Christ's Way," provides a good rubric for thinking about strategy (see Newbigin 1987). Perhaps the most striking fact about Jesus' ministry and the early church is the minimal attention given to strategy. Jesus went about teaching and healing. His life, the embodiment of the message, was as significant as his verbal statements. The early church empowered people for mission but did little more than send apostles on the way, even expecting them to pay their own way.

Mennonite agencies have been appropriately modest about strategies. We have capitalized on the power of a peoplehood as expressed in the spiritual gifts of the members. Our strategies for mission have largely been borrowed from the prevailing models of North American Protestant agencies. Now that these models seem increasingly out of touch with contemporary global culture, we are in search of new ones.

I would suggest that certain styles will be primary mission strategies for the 1990s.

1. Recovering a genuinely incarnational style of service as witness, as salt and light in congregational, conference, and institutional settings. Solidarity by taking up residence, accompanying the suffering, supporting the struggle for survival, will be an increasingly conspicuous part of mission. "The contemporary community of faith is the model of a community with a vision of God's presence in the events of the world, with the courage to allow itself to be drawn toward that presence as a servant of the broken, the oppressed, and the despised" (Hanson 1986:532).

2. Preserving the essence of being Mennonite amidst the maze of denominational and parachurch mission organizations. This essence will highlight simplicity in worship, community as mutuality, discipleship as a quality Christian life, pacifism as a prophetic statement, as the ingredients of life in the divine Spirit.

3. Recognizing the presence of the church on all continents, our approach to mission will increasingly be one of sharing our story, learning other stories to enrich our understanding of the gospel, and strengthening the church on location. A monocultural church will be more ill-equipped for mission than a mononational corporation

is for world trade.

4. Rediscovering the implications of the church as a minority without cultural or societal supports. This Abrahamic, creative, and oftentimes suffering community will transcend denominational boundaries and will call for interchurch mutuality and witness.

5. Being part of the rich minority of the worldwide community of faith imposes special obligations for enhancing global relationships. To serve and to share with the poor, to learn from the poor, to become poor for the sake of the gospel, will be essential for a dynamic world church.

6. Concerning human well-being and the integrity of creation, the church at all levels will intensify its witness in the public arena. There the cause of peace and justice will be strengthened and the voices of the silent and the suffering strongly enhanced.

7. Discerning the role of religion in the making of cultural and political traditions, mission will mean greater attention given to understanding the contexts of traditional religious expressions and ethnicity.

I suspect that mission in the 1990s will be both more identifiable in terms of radical Christianity and less denominational as the missionary, global, peace party becomes more conspicuous in every Christian grouping. This will be both exciting and disturbing. Max Stackhouse says that whereas "in the past, mission has been seen as a phase of cultural imperialism, let it now be seen as an act of humility." Then he adds:

*Only by the persuasive character and intrinsic worth of the content of what we say and do in such wider contexts—as perceived, often resisted, sometimes appropriated, and nearly always modified, corrected and revised by those who receive it in their own ways—does some portion of the truth and justice of God, its orthodoxy and praxiology, become contextualized and globalized and possibly confirmed in life as something more or less in accord with the logos of God (Stackhouse 1989:216).*

Whatever our strategy, Parker Palmer is surely correct that our task is "simply to love the world in every possible way—to love the world as God did and does" (Palmer 1983:82).

### Conclusion: Implications for agencies

Will the 1990s call us to organize for mission any differently than we have in the past? Surely, but as in all historical development the wise among us have been pointing the way (Shenk 1988; Mennonite Brethren Consultation 1988). For those of us in the Council of International Ministries I would comment on three items.

1. If we really believe that we represent the divine vision of restoration and reconciliation, then issues of unity and cooperation should become a priority for each agency's agenda. The task is so large, the urgency so intense, that we need to systematically see ourselves in complementary and supplementary modes. In this age of proliferation of mission groups I often reflect with gratitude for the comity arrangements of the pioneer agencies a century ago. Now financial pressures alone will propel us toward rethinking and arrangements similar to the China Educational Exchange.

2. This does not necessarily mean one or only a few structures. Each agency benefits from close interaction with its support base. Furthermore, the church is a collectivity of gifts. These alone call for some functional differentiation. There needs to be some specialization

based on the task at hand and varied geographical locations. But there is the temptation among us, perhaps not to the same degree as in the larger Christian world, to make functional separations into substantive theological differentiations. The burden ought to be on each of us to see each agency in a mutually supportive way. We ought not to see ourselves as partisans for a special interest. Rather, each of us is a representative of the total church and should sense our responsibilities in the same way.

While this concern focuses on the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ family, I also believe we need to see ourselves in similar fashion with the various parts of the global Christian family.

3. We need a new awareness that mission is everywhere. Jerusalem and Samaria or Europe and North America are mission fields in every way as much as the "uttermost parts of the earth." A strong case can be made that the new priority should be "home" rather than "foreign" missions. Certainly in the 1990s churches of Africa, Asia, and Latin America will be involved in mission and we should welcome their assistance. Mission agencies will not only send but receive missionaries for work in our congregations and communities. Such "reverse" mission will call for stronger connectedness between agencies and their constituent congregations and conferences.

In the 1990s, then, we will need each other as never before. We will need each other as we try to discern the voice of God calling in our time. We will need each other to understand and interpret the voice of the church on other continents. We will need each other to respond appropriately to the invitation to share resources between the wealthier northern Christians and the poorer southern Christians. We will need each other in order to grasp the meaning of suffering, tragedy, and waning power for people accustomed to comfort, control, and progress.

Mission in the 1990s will continue to require a vision, a sense of time, a commitment to the way of Jesus. Marcus Borg observes that Jesus' ministry was an "epiphany of God," a disclosure "that at the center of everything is a reality in love with us and wills our well-being" (Borg 1987:192). Mission as epiphany, the task past, the task present, the task future.

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## Attributes of a Christian Internationalist

NANCY HEISEY

*Anyone who is not good in their own country should stay home. Please do not send abroad anyone who has not proved to be good at home. They will only ruin the church elsewhere. Those who are extremely good at home, and are humble, are needed anywhere. We welcome them. But what counts first is who you are, before what you can do.*

—Angolan pastor

*We are much more concerned with the attitude of people who come than with their background. Workers should come, not as parents, but as brothers and sisters. They must be open to learn. People who say, "We have the truth," should not come. We need people who know who they are and what they believe but are open to other perspectives.*

—Guatemalan professor

*I give you a new commandment: love one another.*

—John 13:34

*Do not think I am giving a new command; I am recalling the one we have had before us from the beginning: let us love one another.*

—2 John 5-6

### Introduction

My aunts are missionaries. I have an early memory of driving to New York City to see one of them off for Africa. We got a tour through the *Queen Elizabeth*, and then we stood on the dock and waved as the ship slowly maneuvered out of port. Missionaries came to visit our church when I was a girl. The woman wore a pink kimono; she and her husband bowed ceremoniously to each other, and then they passed seaweed around for all of us to taste. Another speaker, a missionary nurse, told us about watching for several days over a sick boy in her hospital, praying that God would give her wisdom to know what kind of treatment would help. Then one night as she was sleeping, she saw the word "meningitis" written in red across the

*Nancy Heisey and her husband, Paul Longacre, have just completed a two-year Mennonite International Study Project sponsored by five mission and service agencies. The goal was to ask questions, to listen, and to collect messages from churches worldwide that will inform the overseas goals of Vision 95.*

wall, and she woke up knowing what she had to do.

Most of us grew up with missionary images as part of our church and family life. These images were mostly positive, and even exciting. Missionaries lived in different houses, perhaps with thatched roofs. They could speak other languages. "Jesus loves me" sounded like "Jesus ayo asho ni" to them. They had amazing adventures like killing cobras and helping to pray away evil spirits. They knew people who looked and acted differently than we did. They were helping those other people to learn that Jesus loved them, too.

Most of us have also experienced in some form the deep questioning of the worth of the missionary enterprise that characterizes our time. The positive images have been challenged and failure stories have spread. These questions and challenges have come to us not only from the world outside but from within the churches of which we are a part. In his book *A Spirituality of the Road*, missiologist David Bosch described what has happened: "The validity of what the missionary is and stands for is doubted, not only in the countries of the Third World, but also in his home country, if he comes from the West. Some years ago an American missionary in Korea complained as follows: 'In my father's day coming home was a kind of triumph. The missionary was a hero. Today he is an anti-hero. Even in Christian churches I am eyed askance as a throwback to a more primitive era ...'" (Bosch 1979:18).

When we begin to discuss what the next generation of Christian internationalists should look like, we are expressing by the very title our own ambivalence. We obviously believe that we should be a part of God's work throughout the world in the years ahead. But we are not sure about what part we should play. The term "Christian internationalist" is a gem of an effort to squeeze into two words both the positive connotations and all the cautions about who we are in connection with God's work in the world.

Our title suggests that that ambivalence—or if you prefer tension, or even paradox—is an inevitable part of becoming a "Christian internationalist." This understanding began to grow for me during a conversation with a British professor who had worked in China as a missionary



before the Revolution. He said, "It is exciting that you Mennonites are experiencing a new enthusiasm for mission. My question is, is that enthusiasm based on nineteenth or on twenty-first century perceptions of the world?" It was not difficult for them to point out many mistakes of the "old" missionaries. But they could also ask: "What is wrong with these new missionaries? Why do they get discouraged so easily?"

The bulk of this presentation will outline four clusters of attributes that are called for by those from any culture, especially western cultures, who are going to do service and mission work around the world. Using illustrations from conversations that my husband, Paul Longacre, and I have had during two years of traveling in 45 countries, we will look at physical, educational, psychological-emotional, and spiritual characteristics that have been described to us as important for the next generation of Christian internationalists.

Before beginning that outline, however, I want to make a few comments about the call for persons with a nineteenth-century ("The Great Century of Mission") commitment and a twenty-first century perspective. Defined briefly, nineteenth-century commitment includes a willingness to face the unknown regarding location, job description, and the way personal needs will be met. It includes openness to a long-term commitment, with the concomitant acceptance that career may not be enhanced thereby. Broad aspects of a twenty-first century perspective—and this is an area that needs a great deal of further thought—are accepting the ownership of others over one's work and the undesirability of putting a personal or organizational stamp on one's presence; moving beyond denominationalism to participation in the work of the church of Christ, and earnestly seeking fresh and positive approaches to the modern realities that challenge this church—secularism, religious pluralism, religious fundamentalism, and Marxism/post-Marxism.

### **Physical attributes**

We heard many stories about Westerners whose inability to find a balance on health care issues was a joke or an affront to local people. There was one woman working in South America who wiped off the doorknobs of her home after every local person entered or left. Another woman was so uncomfortable with the hospitals in a European capital that she had to return to North America to have her baby.

Service and mission workers need to be in good physical health. They also need to be able to deal with illness and with the reality that health care systems in other parts of the world will be different. Being different does not necessarily mean that these systems are inadequate or unhelpful. Mission and service workers need to be careful, but not worried. They need to be willing to be sick at times, especially while they are adjusting to a new climate and new "bugs," and sorting out ways in which they can accept local hospitality without putting themselves constantly at risk.

We think of health hazards in tropical climates as particularly threatening, probably because they are so different from hazards to which we are exposed every day in our own home environments. Often it is also in tropical climates where health care systems, as we recognize them, are least functional. Service and mission workers need to accept more responsibility than we are used to "at home" for monitoring their own and one another's health, while

resisting the tendency to hypochondria that runs under the surface of many expatriate communities.

While physical health should be the norm, it is also possible that being ill itself provides an opportunity to be served and to understand better. One Canadian worker who suffered a long illness while on assignment wrote: "Generally speaking, we North Americans operate from the conscious/unconscious assumption that we *deserve* to be happy. . . . Unhappiness is a 'fault' in something or someone. We deserve to be happy, and something is 'wrong' when we're not. And if something's wrong, we fix it, change it, or trash it, don't we? I don't think Ugandans think that way. It's okay to be sad. It's okay to be lonely. It's even, I'm slowly learning, okay to be sick."

Some North Americans in international settings also have to live with the reality that they simply are not able to accept the health care options that local people have no choice but to accept. When we plan for emergencies and long-term health care, we need to acknowledge that sometimes our needs are unjust. We must be honest in trying to draw the line on special treatment for ourselves.

### **Educational attributes**

Often agency job descriptions put emphasis on the academic training that is required for a given international assignment. This fact reflects two realities—that we place high value on training and academic status, and that many other countries, for whatever reasons, now also want to assure that Westerners coming to work in their countries are "qualified." There is no doubt that pre-service training is important. As one person in Korea put it: "Missionaries do a job. They should not come to this country thinking they are doing something a Korean cannot do, but they should have a skill." At the same time, many expatriate workers make too much of their skills, or put too high a priority on exercising them. It is important for international mission and service workers both to have a skill at hand that they are ready to use and to have the patience and willingness to do nothing, or to do something for which they are less skilled.

In addition to technical skills, many informants underlined the importance of biblical training for Christian workers from North America. There are some settings where providing Bible teaching is the primary role for the expatriate worker. We have also observed that many people see this role as a particular gift of Mennonites. In other settings, we heard people saying that, whatever their assignment, mission and service workers should be able to "preach."

Ability to use concepts from the social sciences is another important background skill for international workers. Social sciences—anthropology, sociology, psychology—give workers tools that help them to ask the right questions about their new environments and relationships. When those tools push workers to quantify or explain away their situations, or lead them to plan too far ahead of those they work and live among, social science tools can also impede the work.

Most people, however, put the main emphasis less on academic and background training and more on intangible skills learned in the new setting. Without exception, our informants underlined the absolute necessity of language ability and cultural understanding. One indigenous Argentine wept as he described the liberation and sense of self-worth that had come to him through a missionary who learned his language and ate the food indigenous people

offered him.

There has been a great deal of missiological discussion about the methods by which this cultural and language learning take place, and I do not mean to advocate any particular method here. I only want to point out that the significance of such learning, described to us both by the successes and failures of North Americans in other parts of the world, was clearer and more unanimous than any other thing we heard.

A related idea is that learning from the local setting and the ability to use skills are intimately intertwined. One rural Tanzanian pastor said: "When the first project workers came to us, they learned from us and we from them. We ask that people stay long enough that first they can learn from us and then use this learning in their work."

### **Psychological-emotional attributes**

I want to be very cautious in attempting to discuss psychological or emotional attributes of international mission and service workers. Yet a great many observations made to us by informants about the attributes they look for in international colleagues seem to fall into this general category.

#### *Internal realities*

Some of the emotional questions relate to what I call "internal" realities, and others to external realities. Some of the internal realities have been studied and discussed a great deal—they often form the center of our orientations for outgoing workers. "Bonding" and "culture shock" are two of the key terms. Additional emotional realities which need more attention are those which I call "extended intercultural tension," and the development of a "bi- or multicultural personality."

I define extended intercultural tension as the experience of one who lives and works for a long time in another environment, still experiencing a great deal of discomfort with the patterns and behaviors of the new culture. Some workers are never able to come to a sense of peace about the way things are done in the new culture. This inability seems to increase when Westerners live and work in such a way that their primary contacts are with other Westerners even while in the new culture. Several mission workers who deliberately moved away from Western "enclaves" to settings where they were closer to the host community after years of being "inside" noted how much differently they perceived that host reality from the new vantage point.

The growth of a bi- or multicultural personality may be a phenomenon either opposed to extended intercultural tension or somehow interrelated with it. Some Westerners find much pleasure living in a new culture. They may understand and accept the discomforts of the new environment while taking advantage of all the opportunities, or they may shield themselves within an enclave and only sally forth to seize some advantages of the new environment. In any case, they find life in their culture of origin dull or even depressing. It is very difficult for mission and service workers to learn that, having once left home, they will never again feel entirely at home anywhere. The feeling of delight in and call to their home culture is irrevocably changed—and for some apparently permanently lost.

An additional internal matter is the question of how and when mission and service workers should be open with persons in the new culture about the emotional and psychological stress they are experiencing. "Why don't

missionaries ever talk to us about their problems?" asked a Zairian pastor. "They seem to know all about our problems but do not want to share any of their own problems with us." A willingness to be open about personal problems with trusted persons in another culture is a characteristic that mission and service workers need to develop.

#### *External realities*

In response to external stimuli, the psychological characteristic of flexibility is perhaps the one of highest value. Informants placed a great deal of emphasis on the significance of this characteristic, particularly in relationship to pressure put on church and expatriate workers by government and to the way in which expatriates work under local church structures. In several countries, governments are putting more and more restrictions on what expatriates can do and even whether and how long they can live in those countries. In response to this pressure, informants called for mission and service workers who are respectful to regulations—who comply with financial reporting procedures, for example, or who do not cover prohibited activities under the guise of tourism.

Mission and service workers must live patiently with the suspicion that greets all outsiders, especially Westerners, in some cultures. Some people we talked with recognized this suspicion as a problem within themselves. Others justified this suspicion by their experiences.

Of even greater importance to many was the ability to be flexible in matters related to working under national church structures. Here, as on the question of language and cultural learning, the voices were clear and unambiguous. "We want to be able to talk with you as doctor to doctor and not as doctor to patient," said one. People who are not able to do this, who resist it or circumvent such conversation or corrupt the system, are not welcome as mission and service workers. On all continents, people wondered aloud why North Americans find it so difficult to think of themselves as working on a team that would include local personnel as well. A Colombian pastor described their invitation to new North American workers: "We wanted them to come not as pastors of a newly emerging congregation, but as partners in the leadership team."

"You cannot do it alone," said a Venezuelan pastor. "When you are placing a new worker, match him or her up with a local worker." A church leader in Hong Kong worried about the fact that Western mission agencies have often responded to the problem of expatriates working under local churches by having those workers step aside entirely. "That is the wrong approach," he said. "Foreign missionaries need to find new roles; they can play an active part in 'people' rather than organizational work."

#### *Transfer of loyalty*

One of the most complicated psychological-emotional questions for mission and service workers is the issue of total or near-total transfer of loyalty to the new host culture. We encourage workers to immerse themselves in the culture and language. We speak positively of bonding. We say it is right to work under/in teamwork with local structures. We encourage the search for deep relationships with people from the new culture. But sometimes Western workers "cross over"—become advocates for people in the new culture to the extent that they question or contravene policies of the sending agency. In the early period of workers' assignments, it is hard to sort out what

leads to this experience. But in places where the ideological stakes are high, especially if there is significant conflict between deep relationships in the new culture and the ideology of the culture of origin, some workers feel the pull to cross over. Is this positive? When and how should it be encouraged? When should the agency continue to be a part of the process as the person crosses over and when should the agency encourage the person to develop new support ties in order to carry on the work?

I have no easy answers to these questions. I believe that at times cross over can be good, and that it should not be considered a threat by the agency. The worker in question should be encouraged to be as honest as possible about what is happening. Communication with significant persons from the home culture—family, friends, or pastor, if agency administrators cannot do so—should be part of the process. A careful look at lines of accountability in the host culture should also be encouraged. Workers continuing in assignments in areas of physical and ideological conflict should be given special opportunities for study, reflection, and discussion as part of the process of determining their long-term role in those environments.

### **Spiritual attributes**

"The missionary who comes should be truly converted," said a Zairian church leader. Trying to decipher all that was meant by that brief comment could take an entire paper in itself. However, several comments help to define the meaning of this conversion. Almost all those we talked to put an emphasis on the centrality of commitment to the teachings of the Bible. Many insisted that mission and service workers should be willing to teach only what the Bible says, without adding cultural or religious values to it. Second, most informants emphasized the importance of belief in Jesus and a true presentation of who Jesus is. For many, a foundational understanding is that belief in Jesus Christ somehow brings in or includes people rather than excluding them. "Do we believe Christ belongs to all? Or do we believe people must accept our particular Christ?" one priest asked. "We should serve people and present Christ to them. People have good values. Let them be themselves, but bring them to Christ."

Another aspect of "true conversion" is having an attitude of repentance. Mission and service workers may be more or less aware of the hurts that come from past mistakes. While they should not be paralyzed by that knowledge, they should be willing to find ways to express repentance for such wrongs whether or not they themselves have personally been involved. A Zairian woman teacher expressed her hurt that in earlier days missionaries seemed to find excuses not to eat in her home. She expressed appreciation for one young Canadian who quickly and warmly accepted an impromptu invitation to share a meal together. She would not have described his action as one of repentance, and perhaps he would not have done so either. But the business of turning around, making way for healing of hurts, had taken place.

In several settings, Christians asked for missionaries to come back and help loose ties that had been bound tightly by earlier generations of missionaries. "Our elders cannot accept our young people saying that women should be allowed to speak, or that it is all right not to cover the head in worship. If someone comes from your church and tells that those things have changed there, we may be able to change too," a Nigerian seminary student observed.

Mission and service workers should be willing to give

themselves to ministries of listening and hope. Christians in countries where their own interaction with the outside is strictly controlled expressed a deep desire for outsiders to come to listen to them. "We cannot go out," one Burmese Christian said. "We welcome the chance to talk with you here." A Nigerian university professor remembered an old missionary: "We would see him sitting down to talk with crippled and blind people. He could not change their situation, but by taking time for them he gave them hope. That is why we remember him."

People we met also talked about the call to be peacemakers and what forms it could take for expatriate mission and service workers in situations of conflict. In Nicaragua one church leader criticized mission workers who were unwilling to help local believers think about political realities. A Filipino sister urged service and mission workers from the West to participate in the struggle against the United States military presence in her country. Some people expressed a need for an ability that they have often found among Mennonites—the ability to think about conflict and injustice from a biblical point of view. "We need your emphasis on biblical living, strong fellowship, and political critique in light of the Bible," said a Hong Kong pastor. "Help to support the lonely struggle of people who are working for change in their own countries!" was the cry from Korea and Egypt and El Salvador and South Africa.

Two paradoxes inform the understanding of spiritual attributes that are called for in mission and service workers. One, as cited in the statement of the Guatemalan professor at the beginning of this paper, is that workers must both know what they believe and be open to all perspectives. The second is that there is a call for the biblical message, especially about Jesus Christ, but that message must be spoken in terms of the context where it is being received. Western mission and service workers, who tend to be very uncomfortable with unclarity in exactly these areas, must be encouraged to develop the ability to survive and even thrive in the midst of such tension.

### **Conclusions**

Several random thoughts fall together into the conclusion. First is the story of a Mennonite missionary in South America. When he first left North America, he was 27 years old. He had bachelors of arts and theology degrees. His church work experience was as a song leader and as a member of a congregational visitation team. He had done Civilian Public Service in a mental hospital. Thirty-five years later, the agency works on finding a replacement for him. A job description was prepared calling for someone with cross-cultural experience and a masters degree (at least) in linguistics and/or anthropology. A fellow mission worker, looking at the draft job description, commented: "We have been trying to get sister churches in the region interested in being mission partners with us in this work. But when they see this job description they will conclude there is no way they would ever qualify." One thing we need to understand and have patience for is that "the best" mission and service workers are not born. They are made.

Second, a month ago I made a presentation similar to this to a group of European Mennonite mission leaders. When I had finished one of them, whose daughter is currently serving in Cambodia, said: "There is no one in the world who could fill the bill you have laid out before us." I had to agree. Reflecting then, I suggested that the



four quotes listed at the beginning of the text say all that we really need to know about attributes of the next generation of mission and service workers.

Third, I have concluded that the last word comes to us from brothers and sisters who have received our mission and service efforts over the past century. They have seen us succeed at times, and have seen us fail often. Our conversations with these people indicate that they are better able than we are to understand and accept mistakes, and even to see the good things that may come out of mistakes. "If missionaries here made mistakes," said one Argentine pastor, "they did not do so out of bad intentions. Anyone who tries to do things makes mistakes."

"I am convinced that North Americans find it very difficult to be rid of their prejudices against blacks," said a Beninois church leader of long experience. "We need to accept this fact in love, to accept you and you us. If missionaries, even feeling that way, had not come here, how would I have come to know Christ? So we can say that nothing is useless, nothing is really negative. The things which seem negative we must accept as part of the sinful human condition. God can work even through that."

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## Educating for Global Ministry

DELORES FRIESEN

There is a cartoon that I follow quite regularly. It is Frank and Ernest. They are riding in a little roadster, speeding along gleefully, joyfully, happily. Frank says to Ernest, "When you were in England how long did it take you to learn to drive on the left side of the street?" And Ernest says, "Only three cars." Perhaps that's how we feel about this subject. Even if we've been through three cars and smashed them all, we can start again.

At the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, where I teach, the tension of piety and academia are kept fairly closely together. I would recommend that you read the recent *Mission Focus* article by Henry Schmidt, my colleague, or peruse the brochure that describes the Mission Training Institute of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. This represents a different concept of education for mission. It is not long-term education. It is short-term—one week, one month, three months, one semester. The brochure says many people return at a later time. I know a couple who finished their degrees at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary recently, completed on three different furloughs over ten or twelve years. Perhaps one of the attributes our colleges may be creating but haven't stated explicitly is that *we continue education, we continue to grow*. It is significant that although many of us attended church colleges, we also have been educated by a variety of secular universities and colleges.

Reading through the catalog statements of our colleges and seminaries, there isn't much said about attributes. After listening to Nancy Heisey's comments from our third-world brothers and sisters, I would recommend that our colleges and seminaries be explicit about the attributes they wish to create, if not written in the catalog, then at least defined for faculty and staff. In several catalogs it states that these objectives, attributes, and goals are to be lived out by faculty and staff as well as by students. That is important. At Hesston they put it this way: "Teachers

need to recognize that their lives are their largest teaching tool and that they teach more by their lives than by what they say in the classroom."

Many purposes and attributes are described in the catalogs. I prepared a *Reader's Digest* condensed version of all available statements of purpose, objectives, goals, and anything else that described mission or overseas experiences. I listed all the relevant courses offered by our colleges and seminaries as majors or minors. I explored the debate about whether "mission" should be a major or not, because as Hans Kasdorf has said, "If we confine missiology to a mission department or missions school and isolate missiology from the other disciplines, that is not good. We must have it as a part of all that we teach, as an integrated whole." Everyone needs the biblical and theological disciplines, the philosophical historical studies, the social and political sciences, applied theology and ethnic religious studies, not just those who are going overseas as MCC or mission workers.

Some have said that MCC is perhaps the best educator and going overseas is the best schooling that we have. In his presentation James Juhnke comments on the slick admissions brochures. I agree with his remarks but want to say that at least some of these slick, four-color brochures are clear about the spiritual and the Christian and the Mennonite connections. For example, Bethel uses the following page headings: "Learning to Care in an Uncaring World," "Bible and Religion at Bethel College Helps You," "Peace Studies at Bethel College Invites You," "International Development at Bethel College Asks You." It's all there. Hopefully our students are aware and the people who are considering our colleges and schools do know where we stand. But perhaps we have not done enough to integrate these values into our classroom work.

At Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, I teach Interpersonal Communication as a part of our Pastoral Counseling course work. I began as an elementary teacher and then spent thirteen years in West Africa. I also studied international and comparative education at Indiana University under a professor who truly believed in Ivan Illich and the "deschooling of society." Should we be doing away with

educational institutions? That was considered a viable alternative when I was doing my Master's degree in International Education in the late sixties. When I got into the classroom at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, I thought the best way to teach Interpersonal Communication was to have students communicate with each other by giving and receiving feedback, using a discussion methodology, doing away with the podium, sitting down to teach—in short, dialogical education. I was soon informed that students expected to receive at least five pages of notes from each class period, even in interpersonal communication! When I asked why, the students said, "Well, it is a lot easier. We want to know what you think; we want you to tell us what we should believe and what we should do." My bent is that we have to do it *together*. The attributes that Nancy Heisey cites are taught, not by content so much, as by example and method.

What do the catalog statements of purposes, objectives, and goals tell us that colleges and seminaries are trying to do? You will notice quite a contrast with what Nancy Heisey reports. I did not find many of the things that our brothers and sisters in other countries are asking for. The catalogs talk about things like a spirit of openness, the ability to care, a stance of lifelong learning, the ability to reflect critically, the building of community, and having real-world experiences that impact career choice. The goals seem to be to have students grow in self-understanding, self-confidence, self-acceptance. The studies done of the Goshen College Study Service Trimester (SST) program have shown us that students grow as people through that program. I don't know if that's an attribute or not; but it seems that the focus is on the personal, internal growth of the students. Basically the catalog statements talk in generalities. My impression is that we are not clear enough about what we want to accomplish in our educational program.

Here are excerpts from several catalogs. From Bethel College: "We promote freedom, openness, volunteerism in a world of specialization and fragmentation. We need coherence and linkages; therefore we try to integrate the worlds of faith, learning and work." From Bluffton, "We seek to prepare students of all backgrounds for life as well as vocation, for responsible citizenship, for service to all peoples and ultimately for the purposes of God's universal kingdom." From Canadian Mennonite Bible College: "We are a college which evolved out of a perceived need to inspire, inform, prepare and equip Christians for service at home and abroad."

It is noteworthy that the colleges and schools in Canada have an interesting cooperative venture with MCC Canada called the Service Education Program. Conrad Grebel College, for example, works with MCC in a research project—one of our few schools that seems to deal with research. They have a joint research project on the Horn of Africa and also Project Plowshares, which provides information on the issues of development and peace.

According to Conrad Grebel College's catalog, their objectives and goals are: "To establish an environment in which all areas of thought, experience, and action can be discussed openly and fairly. To develop in students the critical tools of thought and expression, the ability to analyze, understand, and critique our world accurately and responsibly." Their catalog also refers to "the purposes and objectives of forming a community, and the values of having a Christian college within a pluralistic university."

Fresno Pacific College's catalog takes a broad view: "The college embraces the world and its peoples as the

creation of God." Fresno Pacific has a unique setting with more graduate students than undergraduates—perhaps our only Mennonite institution, in addition to the seminaries, that works in the area of graduate studies. Since the Fresno community is more than 50 percent nonwhite, perhaps there is less need to take the students out into a cross-cultural setting. That reality is part of their learning environment; it's also a part of their strategy. For Fresno Pacific College, part of their mission is to train teachers and to send them into the world with Christian values. Whether or not, I might add, these students are Christians themselves, the college is working to instill Christian values in a generation of teachers for that area of the country. More of our institutions could work harder at having a mission right *now* rather than just preparing people for mission beyond the time that they are in school.

Goshen College says, "We want the faculty and the students to develop intercultural openness, the ability to communicate, the ability to think actively and strategically and a healthy understanding of self and others." One wants to ask the how and why and where questions. Can this be achieved in a three-month SST exposure? Are these the attributes and skills that will enable and inspire graduates to participate in the global ministry of the church? In order to focus clearly on the attributes that we try to develop in our colleges and seminaries, we should consider the change process itself. After all, educators are in the business of change, and education is leading people out with care. That's the root meaning of that good old Latin word "Educare"; "E" for exit or out; "du" to go, or lead; and "care" with care. In other words, we are to go out with care and lead others out beyond where they are now. The process of education is leading or taking others out with care.

The process of education must affirm change. James Juhnke and John Lapp have emphasized that "the world is changing and will continue to change." Our schools need to equip students to handle change by creating the attribute of not fearing but of welcoming change, of being able to be mobile and able to adjust. My husband, Stan, grew up in a family that was called to India. Two generations of Friesens served almost seventy years in India. Stan and I went to Africa and were moved around every two years or less, not by our own choice or design, but because the world is a changing, shifting place. It's not as easy to go and be a lifetime missionary and learn languages when you are moved every other year. So how do we deal with change? We still seem to have a bit of hesitation about change, particularly when we think that maybe our institutions should change. And that's one of my questions. Are the attributes just for students and is the SST program just to give students exposure, or is the purpose and goal of SST ultimately to impact and change the college? Where and how has the SST program changed Goshen College now that everyone is going abroad and having intercultural experiences?

C. Dean Freudenberger proposes that we view change as consisting of four steps: (1) heightening awareness; (2) mobilizing resources; (3) developing models; and (4) challenging the structures (Freudenberger 1976).

I submit that good education does all four of these, usually in that order. However, most of the programs I read about and most of my school experiences stopped with step one. They heightened my awareness. I became aware of the needs of the world. I became aware of the environmental issues. I became aware of the gospel of

Jesus Christ in new ways. But it's not enough to heighten awareness. Furthermore, this begins to happen long before college. Nancy Heisey pointed out how her first impulse to mission happened in the preschool or very early elementary years. We ought to give more attention to what is happening with that age-group in mission education and awareness. People need to have some of these "heightening awareness" experiences *before* college so that their minds and their career choices are expanded. To wait until college to do it may be too late. But my question is, "Are we doing more than just making people aware?" And where, after all, does mission take place? Surely, it is not just "overseas." It would seem that institutions of higher education could focus beyond stage one.

Our colleges and seminaries need to move on and *mobilize resources*. One thing this means is that we need to develop the capacity in students, church members, congregations, pastors, and counselors to tap into the resources whether they are in Africa, China, a social science department, the agriculture department, CIDA, MEDA, or wherever. This means not only economic and development resources, but also spiritual resources. I think this is what African Christians are telling us—at least this is what they told us during the thirteen years we lived among them. "You Americans don't teach the whole gospel. We see Jesus healing. You just talk about what Jesus taught. You don't show us how to heal. You don't do what Jesus did." Somehow we need to create a climate in our colleges and seminaries that helps people to be able to think on their feet. We need to help them to be creative and able to seek solutions. We need to enable our students to relate to and utilize community resources. We need to learn how to be assertive on behalf of the poor. Our graduates should be able to open up options and offer choices. They should be advocates for justice. Mobilizing resources is more than "service" or handouts. We need people who will wrestle with the questions of service that were raised earlier. Are we actually healing and giving and bringing people to our standards or are we interested instead in working at mutuality, dialogue, sharing, washing one another's feet, and eating at the same table?

Once we have located both internal and external resources and utilized the community, we need to *develop models*. What might it look like to develop the attributes that are needed in this generation? In our small group, Ruth Gunden said, "Intercultural experience is the best way we have to work at peace." I affirm you, Ruth, for that insight. That is developing a model. That's saying that part of peacemaking is learning to know people who are different from me. We need to look at our model of faculty. When will our faculty be international? We now send our students overseas, but we still haven't brought overseas persons into our faculties and staff. I don't know how it is to learn Hebrew from Anil Solanki at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, but I think he is teaching more than Hebrew.

Pakisa Tschimika was in our congregation recently to preach to us and he asked, "What time does God leave your church?" You know what he meant? Of course, if he preached past 12:00 noon, would God leave? We need such new models—of time, of spirituality.

What happens when our students are hosted by a Costa Rican family who have hosted 21 students from Goshen College previously? That happened to our daughter just this spring. And I think they catered to her. I think they treated her as a guest and a visitor and cooked for her the

things other Goshen College students liked. Maybe we need a model of the family and the student building *new* bridges. Perhaps we shouldn't use the same host families who have now adapted to us and treat us like they think we want to be treated. It's easier administratively, but we may need to look at our models. Are we taking the easy road, or are we building new bridges of communication and linkage? Are we trying to expose our students to the rest of the world? Are we trying to give them only a taste or a glimpse of the USSR if they take a three-week tour of Russia? Are we trying to inoculate them like we do for yellow fever so that they won't catch the real disease? Those are the kinds of questions I have about our models of education. Do our students get just enough exposure that they don't need to change by investing themselves deeply in adjusting to another language and culture? There may be a danger that this is happening. We need creative folks—students, teachers, and administrators—that are willing to develop models. SST is only one model and even that may need some updating!

A seminary student told me of having attended both Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries and Eastern Mennonite Seminary. She found there was no time to be and to reflect, because there was so much to read and write and do. She's asking for a *new* model. Is the purpose of our college and seminary programs simply to develop the self-understanding and self-confidence of our students or their academic acumen? These ideas were fairly prominent in many of the catalog statements. Are these the models that we want to work with? Maybe we've been, like Frank and Ernest, driving on the left side when we ought to be driving on the right. We need creative, artistic people to help us think of new models.

Finally, we need to *challenge the structures*. I know this risks sounding like the sixties. But what does it mean when one of the major concerns at year-end faculty meeting is the fact that the number of books checked out of the library has been declining, rather than discussing the level of spirituality on campus, the relationships that have been built, the power that we've experienced in sharing the healing Word of grace? Reading library books is important. But perhaps people don't have time to read because they are dealing with the drug culture that's right around the seminary, or relating to the eleven new babies who were born this year. It may be that some of these things are also important in challenging the structures. Can we as faculties and administrators respond constructively when student choices and world needs begin to challenge our structures?

Perhaps we're looking in the wrong place when we are training all of these young people. I recently came across a marvelous American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) ad about a person who is a lot older than the people with whom most of you work. The ad says, "Brain Child." The cover girl in the ad has a wrinkled face and underneath her photo the copy reads, "She's a problem-solver who masters complex situations quickly. She is experienced, but has an insatiable curiosity for new ideas. And she is not alone. In the coming decade she and others in her age-group will comprise the majority of America's work force. Informed employers judge people by ability, not their date of birth. Use the experience of a lifetime." I would like to challenge the structures and have Goshen, Bethel, Conrad Grebel, and the rest of our institutions really think about where we can find the people with the time and the motivation for service, intercultural interaction, and global ministry. Maybe we could do more than



what the secular institutions have done with their Elderhostel summer courses? We need to come up with some new models for educating and enabling this age-group, and challenge some of the age-isms which our structures have created.

I have spoken already about the need for an ethnic mix of students, staff, and faculty. I'm also aware of the major attention we give to the attributes of our students. What about the attributes of our institutions? How do our colleges and seminaries come across? I believe it's Bethel that says they will "have no policy that is not people-centered" on their campus. That is an interesting statement of purpose and justice. Is it possible to change structures or are we only able to change individuals? What about advocacy and justice in our world where interdependence is called for on a global scale? Elmer Martens gave me three little booklets from Asian theological schools. He said, "If you're going to talk about this subject, you really ought to be looking at how they do it in the rest of the world." The first booklet says, "Train Asians in Asia." Another one is written by an Indian and gives an Asian view of Mennonites in India and what they need to do there and how they need to work. Basically all of these booklets and brochures are saying that pastors and leaders need to be trained in theology in their own setting, but Westerners may come and join in the task. They are asking Western faculty to take sabbaticals in overseas seminaries and colleges.

Furthermore, I would like to underscore the concern of third-world Christians that we not neglect the biblical studies and preaching experience. You never know when these will be required. I remember the first time, and the many times thereafter, when I had to speak or preach extemporaneously. Stan would be invited to preach and

so he prepared. After he was done, they would often say, "And now, Mrs. Friesen will also bring us a word from the Lord." And so Mrs. Friesen learned to preach on her feet. Fortunately, I had been exposed to extemporaneous speaking in 4-H Club and in high school and college speech classes. These are skills that are always needed. It is important that we work both at the content, that is the heart of the gospel, as well as the methods.

Galatians 5:22 and Colossians 3:12-17 furnish us with statements of the attributes we long to have and need to share:

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.*

*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

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## Preparation: A Panel Discussion

LEE F. SNYDER

*Moderator: Ronald Mathies, Director of Peace and Conflict Studies, Conrad Grebel College*  
*Gerald Mumaw, Director of Latin America, Mennonite Board of Missions*  
*Lee Snyder, Vice President and Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite College*  
*Linda Witmer, Associate Professor of Nursing, Goshen College*

How is the next generation of Christian internationalists to be inspired and prepared? What pedagogical methods and practices are presently employed by colleges and agencies to achieve the attributes that are desired and needed in their graduates and field workers? These questions were posed to panelists bringing international field experience to their current roles as educators and mission program directors.

As the panel reflected on those questions, equally

important issues emerged. How is the call to service nurtured? How can we more effectively ground our efforts in spiritual formation? How can we prepare persons to deal with crisis, a necessary component of the rhythms of the life cycle? How can we more effectively incorporate the "experience-reflection-learning" model as a potent source in our approaches to education and preparation?

Young people are being trained for mission through a variety of programs. Mennonite colleges offer a full range of professional programs from social work to nursing to education. In addition, a variety of academic programs are designed to train persons in peace and conflict studies, youth ministries, mission strategies, church planting, and in a variety of Christian ministry areas. These programs are offered to expand the career preparation of students enrolled in professional degree programs, or they may be majors in their own right.

Panelists agreed that inclusion of experiential components in these formal academic programs are critical for effective preparation of Christian internationalists. Internships, practicums, and cross-cultural study experiences

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contribute to more effective learning by ensuring student involvement. Beyond that they also have the potential for profound and life-changing effects on students who for the first time may begin to understand their place in a world community.

Another potential force in the formal academic process is the mentoring and role modeling of faculty. Panelist Linda Witmer noted that "professors were probably the best example to me of mission and service." They provided affirmation and encouragement as Linda pursued her nursing degree. By being open, honest about their own struggles, sometimes vulnerable, and by dialoguing with students outside the classroom, faculty become a powerful force in the learning process.

Ron Mathies noted that at Conrad Grebel College, for example, the exposure that students have to visiting lecturers with an agenda that reflects the college mission is one way students are challenged to consider their calling—to examine issues from a Christian perspective. While the academic program is recognized as essential for training internationalists, panelists agreed that the non-formal aspects of the educational experience contribute significantly as well. For example, at Eastern Mennonite College, developing rituals in support of the cross-cultural studies component has contributed to the learning of the entire community.

Students going abroad, whether it be to the Middle East, to China, or to South Africa, are given a "send-off." The President of the college has begun a tradition of sending cookies along with the students as they leave for the airport. Parents, faculty, and college and community friends gather to say good-bye.

The return of students from their exposure to another culture is a part of the ritual of community also. Reentry is not always easy as students reflect on the issues their experience has raised, and as they examine their commitment to preparation for mission and service. The chapel service planned by returning students becomes a forum through which these issues are addressed within the broader campus community.

From the mission agency perspective, as Gerald Mumaw pointed out, there are ongoing efforts made to prepare persons for overseas assignments. Agencies do rely on colleges and seminaries to train internationalists, but in addition the agencies themselves are engaged in mission education. More and more, agencies are designing short-term experiences as entry-level opportunities for service.

Key to preparation is informing candidates for overseas service of mission philosophy and of the realities of the job. Mennonite Board of Missions also utilizes an assortment of personality tests to assist in evaluating candidates' strengths and weaknesses. This process touches on the importance of personnel selection. How can suitability for an international placement be finally determined? Panelists and audience respondents noted the difficulties inherent in the question, "How do we effectively help to redirect those who feel called but are incompetent and unsuitable for relationship-centered work?"

In the process of preparation, the complexities of calling and suitability must be carefully weighed, but, as Ron Mathies confessed, "I have the sense that there are people who in fact do not seem to have the abilities, but I look at myself and say that both I as a teacher and the process, perhaps, run out of patience too soon."

Critical reflection and self-knowledge were themes running through the discussion. It is in the crucible of

experience, suggested Gerald Mumaw, that we learn. The cycle of experience (including crisis), reflection, and learning is powerful in shaping effective workers. Mumaw told the story of John Driver, who felt that only after he wrestled with the issue of poverty in Puerto Rico in the 1940s did he really become a pastor. Later Driver transferred to a teaching assignment in Uruguay, but again did not *really* become a teacher until he had faced the crisis of that country's military repression in the late sixties and early seventies.

Personal reflection and evaluation are important. So is evaluation of the effectiveness of formal training programs. Here a paradox emerged. Lee Snyder observed that the importance of academic preparation is not questioned. "Persons going abroad with our agencies are expected to have certain qualifications. At the same time, we are told that the persons going must be willing to lay aside all those qualifications. And they must be willing to be as nothing. How can we as educational institutions prepare students better for that ... for the stance of nothingness in spite of their qualifications?" And a counter question—how can we prepare students for the pressures and difficulties of an international assignment when the normal support structures expected in North American society are unavailable?

In response, Gerald Mumaw cited the example of the earlier stereotype of the self-sufficient pioneer missionary who goes out expected to "stick it out," drawing solely on her or his own inner resources. Society has gone to the other extreme, perhaps, in what Robert Bellah in *Habits of the Heart* describes as the therapy model of communication in our society. However, there is a middle ground. We must prepare persons by helping them develop inner strengths, but not discount the importance of community of which the church is a metaphor.

A key to the achievements of inner strength is the development of spiritual disciplines, Gerald suggested. The emphasis on spiritual formation needs to be given renewed focus as a critical component of the preparation process. A lack in this area suggests a "gap" which needs to be addressed if we are to adequately prepare Christian internationalists.

We were reminded that a recommitment to kingdom values, to a sacrificial sense of calling, will effectively address a number of issues which must be faced as mission agencies and educational institutions seek to responsibly prepare youth for service. Gerald identified these as "living with ambiguity and living with the constant pressure of materialism that is so much a part of our society. How do we counter that with an identification with the poor and dispossessed?"

Challenging educators and mission agencies to consider new directions, Linda Witmer suggested that we think in terms of putting our preparation to practice in our home communities. This very putting to practice would shape the preparation process itself. "Why not develop communities with faculty and students living in a household in a low-income area?" Linda proposed more group projects in coursework, where students would work for a group grade to move away from our strong individualistic and competitive bent. "We expect to teach when we go overseas—to teach community and working together—but yet we do not model it here. And most of us do not have experience in it yet when we go overseas and want to form co-ops."

The old modes of teaching are no longer effective, Linda

noted. We expect more than passive learners where students simply give back what the teacher wants to hear. As teachers, we must foster creativity and dialogue, challenging students to new ways of learning.

Other new directions were cited. Faculty at Mennonite colleges and seminaries are involved in international service appointments from time to time. While acknowledging this as a "real headache" for academic deans, Lee Snyder suggested that this is "one of the most hopeful developments," if our faculty are being lured away from the classroom into international service. Whether for long-term or short-term assignments, this bodes well for continued collaboration between service agencies and educational institutions.

Another new approach is the orientation process itself. More and more, Gerald Mumaw stated, agency appointees are being oriented on location. For example, the China Educational Exchange program has decided to do more orientation in China and less in North America. This is also happening in the Middle East. Persons going to West Africa have opportunity to immerse themselves in the collection of materials in England on African Independent Churches as part of their preparation.

Moving orientation from North America to on-location sites has the potential for fostering the concept of exchange and mutuality. In the audience discussion following the panel, it was emphasized that the notion of an exchange-learning process is one which is very much alive and growing. While the emphasis has been on what North Americans have to offer others ("How many souls have you saved?" "What have you accomplished?"), the atti-

tude of learning from other cultures must be nurtured.

The short-term Youth Evangelism Service program is a good example of the exchange-learning concept in practice. Participants in YES relate to the international church while engaged in discipleship training and development of their own Christian life in a cross-cultural setting. This often serves as a preparatory experience for further training for full-time ministry.

As time ran out and many questions remained, it was clear that the challenge of adequately preparing Christian internationalists would require the best thinking of and collaboration among agencies, colleges and seminaries, and congregations. How do we preserve a 19th-century commitment and energize that commitment with a 21st-century perspective? Mutuality and collaboration clearly will be key as we work together to this end.

The audience was appropriately reminded by one of the respondents of the depth and breadth of the task by observing that this is not an issue just for colleges and mission agencies. For it is often as children that we get that "first nudge toward mission and global awareness. . . . This is where foundations are built."

Finally, it must also be acknowledged that the international scene intrudes in our local communities and congregations. Our effectiveness in preparing Christian internationalists will be judged also by how we respond to persons of color, of other ethnic backgrounds, or who are simply "different." Together we must search out our responsibilities as members of a world community and together we must find effective ways to prepare ourselves and our youth to meet those responsibilities.

## Implementation: A Panel Discussion

LINEA GEISER

*Moderator: Bert Lobe, Overseas Coordinator, MCC Canada (now teaching at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate)*  
*Peter Hamm, Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services (now an MBM overseas worker in Liberia)*  
*Paul McKay, Associate Professor of International Development, Bethel College*  
*Harold Miller, Africa Peace Resource, MCC*  
*Dwight Platt, Professor of Biology, Bethel College*

The discussion on "Implementation" was specific and concrete: What are the practical constraints and issues that arise as colleges and agencies attempt to fulfill their envisioned missions? How can educational institutions and sending agencies cooperate? The task of the panel was to identify constraints, question how to transcend them, and present possible ways of working together toward the goal of international mission and service.

"Money and our attitude toward it restrains us from accomplishing our mission," stated Bert Lobe, moderator of the panel. Quoting Robert Kreider in an earlier address to Mennonite Central Committee, Lobe began the discussion on a sobering note:

*Conspicuous consumption is respectable among Mennonites . . . . Greed has become respectable. Success, consumption, money, accumulation and status have been gaining ascendance among us at the expense, I suspect, of earlier values of simple life, mutual aid, and hospitality. . . . The pervasiveness of these values affect the number of young Mennonites interested in lesser paid vocations of church, teaching, and voluntary service.*

Peter Hamm, after reminding the group of the need to set achievable goals, presented two more constraints. The first had to do with articulating the vision. "Before we implement a program we need to articulate the vision simply and clearly," Hamm emphasized, especially in view of the divergence of the vision presented in earlier sessions of the conference. What are the points of com-



monality between the vision presented by the fifteen agencies and fifteen colleges? Is there commonality among the colleges themselves or among the mission agencies, let alone between the collective group of each? Is there commonality within the denomination between its college/seminary and mission/service agencies?

Hamm suggested these two criteria by which to judge efforts at implementing the vision. First, is Jesus Christ at the center? Are we working toward Christocentric ecclesiology or is preservation and enhancement of an institution or agency really our primary concern? Are we gaining ground for God? Second, articulated earlier by Kosuke Koyama, are we giving considerate judgment to the grace of God? Is there a theology of two benedictions—the divine and the human? Does it lead not only to contextualizing of theology but also to challenging the context itself? Is there that prophetic vision?

The second constraint identified by Hamm had to do with globalization. Structure very frequently inhibits its implementation. Hamm defined globalization or internationalization as transcending national boundaries in the very planning and decision-making process. Why? Because we have come to the end of Western dominance, the end of unilateral decision-making. The center of Christianity is no longer the North Atlantic community. It has shifted southward and eastward. Hamm warned, "We must let go of our power advantage, be it finances, be it our expertise, be it overseas personnel. Along with this, we must let go and undo the obsolete structures and curricula which so easily become sacralized." What we must let go is the lopsidedness symbolized by Robert Kreider's image of an elephant-rabbit partnership.

How do we internationalize mission? By overcoming some of the obstacles. First of all, attitudes need to change, noted Hamm. North Americans need to go out as servants. Jacob Loewen's question, "Are missionaries drivers or spare tires?" needs to be addressed. Do we insist on being in the driver's seat? What about the expectations of a sending church? Have we overcome the mentality represented by "the one who pays the piper, calls the tune"?

Structures need to be modified, including change at board and administrative levels. Creation of international teams is a must. There will need to be decentralization. Orientation may have to take place in overseas settings. Living together in international teams brings persons to some nitty-gritty issues such as lifestyle, salary, and benefits. How uniform are they? How do we handle these questions?

Language can be a constraint to implementing our mission, stated Harold Miller. He drew on Walter Brueggemann's insight that we must find language to lead us into the future—just as the Old Testament prophets conjured up new language to point their way to the future. Miller stated, "I think the words we use and the language we have been left with as a result of our forays in the world do say something about where we are. Words such as sending, delivering, supervising—control language—is still common. (He noted that even this weekend conference still seemed part of the "going" rather than "receiving" model.)

Elaborating on the language of the future and how it might be generated, Miller quoted an African writer who says that when God creates people in the image of God, God does not give all divine attributes to every individual. God distributes them to each person according to his or her possibilities, as in the parable of the talents. When

God creates societies, God creates them in the image of divine society. Without making more divine societies, God endows each society with certain values different from those of other societies. When each people eventually brings to Christ the value granted to it by the Creator, the uniting of these values will then be able to recreate on this earth the manifold, complex countenance of God.

We cannot decide ourselves what the language of the future will be. Nor can we decide by ourselves to change it. The language of the future and the structures can only be changed with people from other parts of the world.

Miller's experience of watching Africans respond to the gospel in the world in which they live helped him to see the gift of receiving, absorbing, distilling, rearranging, regurgitating, all as a part of the receiving. He wonders if we are sensitive to hearing that process.

Peter Hamm, commenting on Miller's presentation, suggested that we need mission in reverse—missionaries from other nations coming to our country.

Beginning with the affirmation that Mennonite colleges have a remarkable pool of young people who can be inspired and prepared for a lifetime commitment to service, Paul McKay shared what has happened at Bethel College during the past decade in their international development program. Since 1979, thirty-seven persons have graduated from the program with seventeen of them working in international service, nine presently in graduate school obtaining more preparation for service, and seven in domestic service in urban areas. Only four are in what might be considered more traditional occupational service roles in the U.S.

McKay highlighted some constraints faced by Mennonite colleges. Since colleges do reflect the values and trends of North American society, financial and job security have become high priorities for students. Colleges, due to demographics and economics, put most emphasis on college programs that draw the largest amount of students and are most cost-effective. Since not enough students consider international service as a vocation, colleges are under pressure to eliminate such programs or not to start them at all. Even students who do consider service think of it as an interlude rather than a lifelong calling. If service is an interlude, few students feel it is worthwhile to acquire special cross-cultural training for overseas service.

McKay also noted that Mennonite colleges are not currently seen as centers for leadership training of foreign Mennonite leaders so they can be directors of mission and development work in their own countries.

Since intensive preparation of college students for global ministry of the church is expensive, McKay asks "Who will pay the cost?" College administrators expect Mennonite church agencies to help provide resources for mission preparation and international development programs, while church agencies do not see financial support for undergraduate programs as their responsibility. There are exceptions. McKay reported that MCC provided a cost subsidy to Bethel students participating in interterm trips to Central America.

One suggestion for this dilemma is the creation of a kind of college debt relief payment that agencies would pick up for graduating students who wish to go into voluntary service.

Dwight Platt, the final panel speaker, commented, "I come back to the reality that globalizing the curriculum competes with many other concerns, with many other

priorities which the college has." Platt, in thinking about the implications of preparation for international service, saw competition for funds, for personnel, for students as a constraint to Mennonite colleges in their planning for international service education. He noted that a recently completed study of the international development program at Bethel to see how it fits into the college program revealed that many of the college's constituents feel it is an important part of the college's mission. But, asked Platt, is the program affordable? It is not a high-growth area. There are not large numbers of students clamoring to get into international development.

The other aspect of international education, Platt noted, is the globalization of all students. "How do we provide some sort of global awareness within the experience of college students whether they plan to spend time overseas or whether they simply intend to be good citizens of the world here in North America?" he asked. Platt sees the international development program at Bethel as a contribution to the global experience of all students on campus. International development does fit into the mission of the college, but it competes with many other good things that the college offers.

According to Platt, academic structures also are a constraint to be dealt with. "In international development we are dealing with topics, issues, which transcend academic discipline, and yet our college is very highly structured in terms of academic disciplines. We give high priority to analysis and research within departmental boundaries, but less thought to the way in which these departmental disciplines relate to one another, less thought to the way in which the total global system operates and how these departments and the understandings from these disciplines relate to this global system." He suggested a partial solution to the problem might be restructuring majors or reducing the emphasis on whatever majors students choose.

Platt underscored that colleges don't feel very comfort-

able with indoctrination, with trying to change the values of students. He observed that we need to find creative ways to encourage the value changes which promote global awareness.

In the discussion following the presentations, panel members grappled with how to change lopsided partnerships between the North American church and overseas churches, developed as a result of earlier mission efforts. Peter Hamm noted the need to move toward complementary interdependence. He suggests that where you have a true kind of interdependence, each partner gives what it can, and these common resources go into a pool detached from either. Then a decision-making body which represents both partners will determine where these resources and how these resources are spent. Hamm also sees the development of international teams, including North Americans, who get their training overseas as a way to help North American partners control their ownership impulses.

In answer to the question "How do we become a receiving people?" Harold Miller suggested we learn from groups that are forming on the grass-roots level in many countries. Robert Chamber's book *Putting the Last First* would be a helpful resource.

Kirk Alliman closed the session with a final question. "Are we here to figure out how to develop a pool of young Mennonites with the appropriate attributes who can be recruited by our church agencies to do the professional staff work of outreach and ministry for decades to come, or are we here to figure out a way to create hundreds of thousands of internationalists in our denominations who will provide the understanding, the acceptance, the financial support for international service and mission? Or are we talking about both of these?" He concluded, "In any case, Mennonite colleges will play a vital part whether people on our campuses end up being professional staff, or whether they provide that framework, that community, the resources which make the rest possible."

## Of Visions, Dreams, and Realities: Reflections on a Conference

RONALD J. R. MATHIES

### Conference purpose and format

This conference, the final event of the yearlong celebration of twenty years of the Goshen College SST program, brought together some 125 participants representing more than fourteen Mennonite and Brethren in Christ institutions of higher learning and eleven mission and service agencies. The aim of the conference, planned by an ad hoc committee representing colleges, seminaries, agencies, and returned workers, was to try to enunciate a common vision for preparing the next generation of

Christians to participate in the global ministry of the church. The focus was on the decade of the nineties and beyond and called for a creative and bold envisioning of the future.

While the format contained the usual presentation of papers, panel discussions, and plenary and small-group interchange, an attempt was made to simulate "Christian Base Communities," with times of worship, discussion, and analysis. The process was thus to serve as one model of how this education for mission might be implemented.

The strong emphasis on dialogical process among different groups, while useful in itself, never quite generated the intensity of interaction and creativity needed to spawn

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new ideas. While there was some call to challenge present structures or to begin afresh, it was easier to talk about present preparation and implementation patterns than to envision new models. Obviously the goal of moving from vision setting to planning for implementation in two days was too ambitious. As one participant commented, "We didn't dream, we didn't celebrate, but we did work hard."

### **Conference presentations**

Four types of input provided the substance for discussion. Koyama's keynote address set a provocative tone as he challenged old symbols and tried to stretch the participants in new directions. The Friesen and Juhnke papers provided educational institution perspectives while the Heisey and Lapp papers furnished mission and service agency understandings. Panel discussions on present educational programs and constraints to program implementation completed the picture.

### **Conference achievements**

Consensus appeared to be reached in two broad areas. In the first instance, it was generally agreed that closer cooperation between educational institutions and mission/service agencies was both necessary and desirable for the coming decades, but no clear directions were provided as to how this could be accomplished. Indeed, there were, surprisingly, no strong calls for specific institutional cooperation. Second, the need for a clear understanding of global realities and a concomitant call for involvement in global mission were repeatedly stated. There was ambiguity, however, as to whether the necessary preparation should be aimed at those who would eventually become agency personnel, or whether it should be provided for all students with the aim of responsible global citizenship.

The conference suffered because of the absence of two groups of potential participants. The seminaries were underrepresented because of conflicting, previously scheduled activities. More important, there were few non-North Americans present to offer a much needed alternative perspective. The unintended result was an assumed ability to define the components of the process from a Northern/Western perspective and an implicit ownership and control of the projected global agenda.

Nevertheless, there were strong calls for service to "begin at home" and for "reverse" mission. In the case of the former, Koyama suggested it was more important to "stay in" than to "come out," and others recommended that attempts be made "in Winnipeg before they are tried in Sao Paulo." In the case of the latter, Lapp underscored the obligation and opportunity to have cross-cultural missionaries in North American congregations and communities. Bert Lobe was more specific, and called for half as many people from other parts of the world to be invited to North America to preach, teach, and serve by 1995, as were being sent out from here to other parts of the world.

### **Ongoing agenda: Where to from here?**

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the conference

was the agenda framed for the future. Several issues were left begging follow-up and direction.

New models of interaction with, and learning from, the global church were called for. Kirk Alliman said it well: "How will all Mennonites around the world relate to each other? When will we sit down as an international body and do our missionizing, strategizing, and planning as a global community?" There was a call for a common vision in a spirit of reciprocity and mutuality. For some this meant having an international faculty. For others it meant taking formal education in overseas settings. Still others called for orientation programs in host countries.

The need for inter-institutional and interagency cooperation was often implied and is surely fundamental to future effectiveness. No attempt was made to define what new structures this might require. On the educational front much work remains to be done: research and curriculum design using experiential learning; new methods of understanding global realities in early childhood education; fresh comprehension of how to challenge an affluent society and student body. There was a call for agencies and institutions to better understand the cyclical nature of reflection and action, learning and working, going and coming. This will demand a much closer linkage between institutions and agencies in ongoing spirals of learning and serving.

Throughout the conference references were made to the inadequate and inappropriate "control" language that was all too prevalent. Participants felt uneasy about the constant reference to "going, sending, delivering, managing, supervising." Even the conference catch-phrase, "Christian internationalist," came on hard times and was considered suspect. Harold Miller called for deliberate development and deployment of creative, holistic language which would help shape new paradigms of interaction. Koyama called for new symbols, others called for new metaphors.

Finally, there is a need to take the above agenda to the supporting churches and conferences for concerted action. There was more than a little question as to whether the necessary moral and financial support to implement the desired changes would be forthcoming. As one person suggested, "Globalization is in, but are we prepared to pay the price?"

### **The best is yet to come**

The conference provided a clear sense of the task at hand for mission/service agencies: "The church in mission in Christ's name identifies with and participates in the brokenness of our world through prayer, listening, going, presence, waiting, ministry, witness, invitation and compassion" (from Findings Report). As firmly held was the notion that the educational institutions were critical in shaping life decisions that would influence future generations toward that mission. The new dreams and fresh visions of how these are to come together are still waiting to be articulated.



# Findings Report

EDGAR METZLER

## Introduction

Preparing the next generation of Christians to participate in the global ministry of the church was the common concern that brought together 125 representatives of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ mission and service agencies and educational institutions. The purpose was to promote dialogue toward a common vision for this task. The conference was sponsored by the Council of Mennonite Colleges, the Council of Mennonite Seminaries, and the Council of International Ministries.

This findings report attempts to summarize the presentations and discussions of the conference and focus some of the issues, concerns, and recommendations that emerged.

## The global vision

In Jesus of Nazareth the Word became flesh. That conviction is the soul of Christian mission, a mission which blesses both humanity and God. Both our biblical hermeneutic and participation in mission need to be informed and critiqued by that one who is the Word. As we interact with the global community and experience the questions and objections which the world presents to the church, we discover new dimensions of the biblical story and metaphors.

Christ crucified reveals new insights within themes such as ark versus world, Exodus versus Pharaoh, or Elijah versus Baal. God in Christ does not retreat into self-centered security while the world is abandoned to destruction as the ark analogy has sometimes been understood, nor escape from oppression and suffering as the Exodus may indicate, nor destroy the enemy as at Mount Carmel. Rather, Jesus comes into the world, yes, even a hostile world, and through his broken body embraces that world inviting all people to participate in salvation.

Authentic Christian mission is an obedience response to Jesus Christ who in his life, death, and resurrection reconciles us to God and to one another. As God sent Christ, so his disciples are commissioned to serve in the same Spirit with which he ministered. Such mission in Christ's way proceeds from communities who gather in his name. The congregation, local and universal, is the center of global Christian mission in all of its rich diversity. No one focus is the total, yet all seek the expansion of God's rule throughout the earth. All the gifts and ministries of the church are needed: compassion and evangelism, church planting and presence, dialogue and proclamation, justice and peace, confrontation and reconciliation, healing and comfort, development and education. Although a mission/service agency, educational institution, or congregation may express a particular aspect of mission, all the gifts are needed, so that God and humanity may be blessed.

Global realities help to inform the expressions which mission will take. However, we need to be aware that those realities may distort perspectives or deflect commitments. A century ago the global perspectives of progressive Mennonites were shaped by optimistic confidence in

Western progress. Today pluralism and individualism also threaten to distort commitments. Themes such as global community or international development are celebrated. We must also celebrate the miracle and significance for human development of the creation, presence, and mission of the church. Faithfulness in mission and service must be nurtured, sustained, and disciplined by the church, those visible communities who confess Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Anabaptist understandings of church and mission need to be understood and applied.

During the next decade, faith in Christ will nurture hope within a world where hundreds of millions groan under the burden of exploitation, alienation, poverty, hunger, homelessness, oppression, torture, guilt, personal failure, sin, and death; and where millions of others are spiritually impoverished by their response to affluence. This mission must now happen within a predominantly urban world which is creating a deepening ecological, economic, and social crisis. Mission happens in a world of militarism and violence. Those in mission listen and express the gospel among religions and ideologies, which are increasingly self-conscious. Although modern realities have eroded the optimism of a century ago, the church in mission in Christ's name still joyfully identifies with, and participates in, the brokenness of our world through prayer, listening, going, receiving, presence, proclamation, waiting, suffering, ministry, witness, invitation, celebration, and compassion.

In times such as these, the fact that the church is now present throughout the global community provides increasing and rich diversities of gifting for global mission. The church in the West is declining in economic power and influence. During the 1990s, international and interdenominational partnership in mission will become increasingly normative. We can discover increasingly the blessing of mutuality and interdependence among the international fellowship of disciples of Christ.

## Attributes

The attributes of "Christian internationalists" must first of all be those of a mature Christian on any continent. The call to love one another is a specific challenge in the cross-cultural situation where differences in values bring tensions. The attributes needed for faithful mission and service include the following:

### *Christian Faith*

The first cluster of attributes identified are descriptive of our Christian faith:

1. An experience of God's grace and an awareness of the call of God to service.
2. A life characterized by spiritual gifts and disciplines.
3. Biblical knowledge integrated into life.
4. A commitment and ability to share one's faith in Christ with others.
5. An ethical life of integrity, honesty, mercy, and justice.
6. A lifestyle of servanthood and Christlikeness.

### *Valuing People*

The second cluster of attributes describes our relationship with other people. Fundamentally, love for people is

the basic characteristic to which Scripture calls us. All of the following specific characteristics are expressions of love.

1. Empowering other people often by voluntarily giving up power or sharing power; also by using our power on behalf of others.
2. Learning from people and confiding in people as part of mutuality and interdependence.
3. Learning language and culture as an expression of respect and appreciation as well as a means of coping.
4. Accepting hospitality, food, and generosity from others.
5. Adapting lifestyle in a way appropriate to those with whom one is ministering.

### *Community*

Since North American individualism dilutes our sense of community, mission and service workers need to give special attention to attributes such as the following:

1. Commitment to mutual care, support, and discernment.
2. Sharing and cooperation on shared projects.
3. Servanthood.
4. Justice and advocacy.
5. Networking and resourcing.

### *Personality and Character*

The attributes mission and service workers will need to survive and enter into a constructive relationship with their environment include the following:

1. Adaptability/flexibility.
2. Creativity.
3. Humor/joy.
4. Appreciation of hosts and their culture.
5. Wisdom/discernment.
6. Humility.
7. Hospitality.
8. Willingness to consider long-term commitment.

These attributes need to be nurtured in many contexts: the local congregation, the home, college and seminary, experience in the home community, and cross-cultural settings.

### **Preparation**

We recognize that preparation is carried out in two important arenas:

#### *Home/Church*

The home and local church have played a crucial role in stimulating interest in service. We need to encourage continued strong involvement by both. This can be fostered by:

1. Family models of service and mission involvement.
2. Spiritual formation and personal disciplines.
3. Discernment and calling process ("shoulder tapping").
4. Exposure to internationalists ("hearing the stories").
5. Continuing education for global awareness among adults to increase their involvement in world mission.

#### *Institution/Agency*

Educational institutions perform the major education and training functions, but the program agencies also play a role, especially in describing desired outcomes.

1. Pedagogical assumptions and methods.
  - a. Special preparation of faculty for participation in

international service training program: 1) philosophy of global education; 2) teaching models in multicultural perspective; 3) intercultural experience.

b. Practitioners must be incorporated in training process.

c. Faculty from other cultures will enrich the educational experience.

d. There should be a combination of experiential and classroom approaches to education.

e. Lifelong learning skills should be developed.

#### **2. Curriculum.**

Two views of curriculum have been identified; they may be contrasting or complementing:

a. Foundational approach: 1) arts and science base; 2) theological/biblical studies, including practical application in preaching, Bible study methods, and in ministry skills; 3) language; 4) reflection (journaling).

b. Specialized: determined by professional interest.

#### **3. Location.**

Preparation is carried out in different environments. Two locations for training should be considered:

a. Local (first phase). First cross-cultural experience should occur within one's own country for reasons of support, processing of experience, and testing of readiness for service.

b. International (second phase). Study of language and issues to be confronted in host culture in the process of the learning assignment.

c. Movement from first phase to second can be facilitated by a "readiness" test.

#### **4. Length of practicum/internship.**

a. This requires flexibility at the college level.

b. Assignment length to be determined by specific assignment and objectives.

#### **5. Institution/agency relationship.**

a. To achieve the kind of quality training envisaged for Mennonite youth to be Christian disciple-servants in a global community will require close collaboration between educational institutions and program agencies. The Canadian Service Education Program (SEP) provides one model.

b. Use of returned workers on college and seminary campuses to provide information, inspiration, and to stimulate discussion can help bridge between training and current ministries.

c. Periodic check-ins between program agencies and educational institutions concerning status of programs (including evaluation of both training and ministries), issues, and future needs will be highly desirable. This may include large-scale consultations similar to this one or more specialized seminars for particular categories of administrators or teachers.

6. The cultivation of commitment to service and mission needs to be incorporated at many points—in curriculum, faculty modeling, and exposure to current programs of ministry.

### **Implementation**

The following are some of the questions and issues that came to the fore in thinking ahead to the implementation of our vision and concerns.

1. Is there sufficient convergence of vision for good cooperation between the colleges and service/mission agencies? We need to identify the diversity of mission, set achievable goals, and challenge our own context.

2. Can we develop a common vision in a spirit of

reciprocity, with the partners/companies with whom we serve and work cross-culturally? We need to transcend national and denominational boundaries, adopt a servanthood posture, and restructure and decentralize our administration.

3. The language we use to describe our efforts is significant; control language is too prevalent. We must continue to be a "going and giving people." Can we also learn to be a "receiving people"?

4. Can agencies/churches provide financial resources for undergraduates for internships?

5. Money and our attitudes toward it, our participation in North American consumerism, and the expectations for career advancement and economic upward mobility, are forces impeding our mission.

6. How can we affirm the creativity and giftedness of the entrepreneurs and business persons in our churches and welcome their participation in service and mission?

7. The language we use to describe our involvement in God's mission is almost totally informed by Western scholarship and our own experience. Could we, by 1995, invite half as many persons from the developing world as we send out?

#### Other issues

1. North America is increasingly becoming an arena for cross-cultural mission and service.

2. The attributes of "Christian internationalism" are needed as much by those living in North America as by those sent overseas.

3. Christians should exemplify good global citizenship.

#### Recommendations

1. The Council of Mennonite Colleges (CMC) should develop evaluation criteria for teachers and students that reflect Anabaptist service and mission values.

2. CMC should provide a forum for consultation of faculty and staff about curriculum development and strengthening of a global ministry ethos on our college campuses.

3. The agencies and colleges should work with the congregational resource boards of denominations to respond to and enhance the global ministry awareness at the congregational level, with special emphasis on children and youth.

4. Those responsible for congregational education should be included in further consultations on this subject.

5. Colleges should explore alternative models for education responsive to global realities.

6. Links with colleges in other countries, especially the two-thirds world, should be explored.

7. All agencies and colleges should consider all possible means of cooperation and coordination as a good stewardship of resources and a witness to unity.

8. CIM and CMC should consider how the exploration and sharing begun at this meeting can be enlarged, including the need and feasibility of a follow-up consultation.

## In Review

*Share Your Faith with a Muslim.* By C. R. Marsh. Chicago: Moody Press, 1987, \$1.95 (pb)

*Share the New Life with a Jew.* By Moishe and Ceil Rosen. Chicago: Moody Press, 1987, \$2.80 (pb)

#### Reviewed by Donald R. Zook

The author of *Share Your Faith with a Muslim* was a pioneer missionary in Algeria for many years and more recently served in the Chad Republic. He shares the benefits of 45 years' experience by explaining Islamic traditions and beliefs and by suggesting principles which can lead Christians in culturally sensitive ways to present the gospel to Muslims without compromising truth.

His twofold purpose is to help younger missionaries who work among Muslims in other countries, as well as English-speaking persons who wish to understand Muslims who now reside in their country. I feel the author has accomplished his purposes effectively.

After reading this book, I purchased copies to give to each of the missionaries of my denomination's mission board who work in Muslim countries. This is an excellent tool. It can also assist missionary supporters to pray more knowledgeably and empathize more completely with the missionaries for whom they are interceding.

In the book *Share the New Life with a*

*Jew*, the Rosens emphasize that God uses our love and intercessory prayer as tools to bring Jewish people to himself. The book contains material from a seminar on "How to Witness to Jews" which was given in scores of churches across the country. It is intended for the dedicated Christian of ordinary ability who has contact with a few Jewish friends and who desires to share the Messiah with them. I find the book useful to witness to these special people in our obedience to the great commission.

Moishe Rosen is executive director of Jews for Jesus. He grew up in an orthodox Jewish home and accepted Jesus as his Messiah at age 21. Ceil is the wife of Moishe. God used her quiet witness to win her husband to Christ and to play a significant role in both of their daughters' salvation. She is editor of the Jews for Jesus newsletter.

*Donald R. Zook is executive director of Brethren in Christ World Missions, Mount Joy, Pennsylvania. He previously served 15 years in Zimbabwe and 12 years on the Messiah College faculty.*

*By Their Blood: Christian Martyrs of the Twentieth Century.* By James and Marti Hefley. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1988, 636 pp., \$14.95 (pb)

#### Reviewed by Eldon DeFehr

*By Their Blood* is a twentieth-century sequel to *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. It is the most extensive and thorough treatment of Christian martyrs in our century. Over 40 pages of bibliography are reflective of the amount of research that went into this book. Another 20 pages of references make up the helpful index. Several years of travel and study went into the making of this book.

The material is organized into nine geographic regions. Each section stands on its own. Even individual accounts are of interest by themselves. The style, as one would expect, is narrative.

James and Marti Hefley specialize in writing about missions and dispel various myths about martyrs. Martyrs have not primarily died at the stake; they have not necessarily died directly because of their witness. Martyrdoms have not only taken place in the early church, or during the Counter-Reformation. On the contrary, the 20th century has seen more martyrs for the faith than any other century.

The authors are forthright in relating the circumstances and causes of each death, but they avoid sensationalism. To read of



the heroic sacrifices of life for the sake of the spread of the gospel and the building of the church is a moving experience. Much of Western Christianity seems shallow and bland against that background.

There are some special features which add to the value of *By Their Blood* as a resource book. A historical sketch of each country traces the main features of missionary work and provides a context for the martyrdoms. Included are references to pioneer missionaries as well as to political, religious, and social conditions. Backgrounds are also given on some of the major movements.

*By Their Blood* is excellent supplemental reading for missions. But it is unfortunate that some updating was not done. Our understanding today of the fruit borne from the martyrs' seed in China, for instance, is much different than when this book first went to print in 1979. Nonetheless, the book is recommended for both research and inspirational reading.

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Eldon DeFehr is President of Winkler Bible Institute, Winkler, Manitoba.

**Overcoming Missionary Stress.** By Marjory F. Foyle. Kent, United Kingdom: MARC, 1987, 162 pp., \$9.95 (pb)

#### Reviewed by Joyce Warkentin

Stress is normal, it is okay, it is even productive. However, a high level of stress is often intrinsic in the missionary task. Transition times such as selection and orientation, language learning, culture shock, changing stages of parenting, interpersonal and marriage conflicts, or reentry experiences pose situations which can make the missionary feel hurt, helpless, inferior, guilty, or fatigued. When a missionary does not have adequate coping skills, casualties can occur.

Dr. Marjory F. Foyle has served for 30 years as a medical missionary and director of a psychiatric center in Asia. She is now a consultant psychiatrist to many missions with a worldwide itinerant ministry. She writes out of her wide experience, with a concern to give practical help to missionaries and mission agencies.

Using lay language, she guides the reader in understanding what causes stress and what goes on in our bodies and emotions. She suggests practical, attainable steps to deal with stress for specific occasions and groups. Most missionaries can identify with situations and helpful suggestions given in chapters for singles, first-time missionaries, couples, parents, children and adolescents, and those reentering their home cultures.

Mission administrators will find helpful material on the selection process and will gain a greater awareness of potential stress situations for missionaries.

*Overcoming Missionary Stress* is a one-volume guidebook that reassures those of us in cross-cultural ministries that there is hope in stressful times. Illustrations from the author's experience and from the Scripture help us understand ourselves and increase our ability to cope with our own stress and lovingly support colleagues in stress. It is "must" reading for missionaries in all stages of ministry. The book can be ordered with a check for \$9.95 from EMIS, P.O. Box 794, Wheaton IL 60189.

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Joyce Warkentin is an administrative assistant at the Center for Training in Mission/Evangelism at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California, and a former missionary in Indonesia.

**The Pastor-Evangelist in Worship.** By Richard Stoll Armstrong. Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster Press, 1986, 216 pp., \$9.95 (pb)

#### Reviewed by Palmer Becker

While about 75 percent of the new people coming to a church are invited by a friend, those same people usually decide to stay or leave on the basis of how the worship service is conducted. Richard Armstrong convincingly argues that the pastor who hopes to see the church grow needs to give central attention to worship. A contemporary pastor-evangelist like Gary Miller of Algonquin, Illinois, who has seen his congregation grow from 80 to 1,300 in seven years, would agree.

Much of the content of this book is what I would call "sanctified common sense." But don't despair! The first two chapters are well worth the cost of the book. Armstrong gives suggestion after suggestion that will help worship leaders, pianists, choirs, and pastors make visitors feel included, welcomed, and joyfully ministered to in their very first worship experience.

Chapters three to six give practical help for leading special services such as weddings, funerals, and baptisms which generally attract many visitors. The final five chapters help the pastor look through evangelistic eyes as he or she prepares and preaches the message.

Armstrong writes with integrity. The evangelism he encourages is not based on the cleverness of gimmicks but on the sincerity of faith.

This is a book I will give as a gift to my

key worship leaders, followed up by discussion and a weekly checklist to help us to a more creative, joyful, connected worship service worthy of the God and Savior we proclaim.

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Palmer Becker is pastor of the Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, British Columbia.

**Critical Choices, A Journey with the Filipino People.** By Dorothy Friesen. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1988, 284 pp., \$12.95

#### Reviewed by Gordon Wiens

"No country in Asia has had its identity so distorted or its great patriots so frustrated as they set about the task of fashioning an independent vision for its people and life." This statement by Dorothy Friesen is echoed throughout her book. She takes a well-researched, behind-the-scenes look into past and recent events of the Philippines.

Her personal experiences have filled the book with descriptive feeling. Having been a part of the people, she understands their cry. She made great efforts to discover the real issues of the nation; her reviews on such issues as land reform, economics, and revolutionary movements speak for themselves.

The reader cannot help but want to become involved in the struggle for justice for the masses who are mistreated and struggling. To say with one Filipino, "Every tear that we shed is a drop into the flood that shall sweep us to victory." There is a unified commitment amidst personal loss and sorrow which gives these people hope.

This struggle also goes on within the heart of the writer as unfairness begins to overwhelm her and becomes perfunctory in opening her eyes to a God of justice.

The author's strong response to America by what she has witnessed is that our task "is to remove our country's negative influence and unwarranted interference in Philippine affairs." An insightful study has shown both the positive and negative side to this relationship.

This is a book released for those interested to know the truth.

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Gordon Wiens is assigned to church planting in the Philippines with the RBMU International.

**Helping Missionaries Grow: Readings in Mental Health and Missions.** Edited by Kelly S. and Michele Lewis O'Donnell. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1988, 568 pp., \$17.95 (pb)

**Reviewed by Jonathan J. Bonk**

To my knowledge, this is the first book on the subject of the mental health of Western missionaries. The O'Donnells are a husband-and-wife team of psychologists, graduates of Rosemead School of Psychology at Biola University. On the staff of Youth With a Mission and currently based in Amsterdam, Holland, they teach and counsel in the areas of missionary preparation, missionary family life, and cross-cultural adjustment.

There is little that is new here, the chapters having been culled from journals like *Journal of Psychology and Theology* and *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. But it is convenient to have these articles so easily accessible.

The book's fifty chapters are classified under 1) Missionary Preparation; 2) Missionary Families; 3) Missionary Adjustment; and 4) a miscellaneous collection of topics like mission agencies, women in missions, repatriation, and cross-cultural counseling.

There is nothing said about the mental health of non-Western missionaries, and as is often the case in missiological books, one has the impression that missionaries—at least real missionaries—all emanate from the West. The vast numbers of cross-cultural Christian missionaries who are Asian, Latin American, or African, are simply ignored. This is not the fault of the editors since they compiled what was available, but it is a sad commentary on our preoccupation with ourselves.

The book lacks an index, a feature that would have enhanced its usefulness as a reference tool. The appendix contains a classified bibliography of published and unpublished sources on the subject of missionary mental health. Most chapters are nontechnical and easy to read. In my view, this should prove useful to mission leaders, missionary parents, teachers of missionaries, and their children. I plan to use it in my senior mission studies colloquium.

*Jonathan J. Bonk is Professor of Mission Studies at Winnipeg Theological Seminary, Otterburne, Manitoba.*

**Mission and Ministry.** By David E. Van Reken, M.D. Wheaton, Ill.: Billy Graham Center, 1987, 75 pp., (pb)

**Reviewed by L. Patton**

Subtitled *Christian Medical Practice in Today's Changing World Cultures*, Dr. Van Reken wrote this book while a missionary scholar in residence at the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois.

The stated purpose of the booklet is to identify trends occurring in missionary medicine which are altering approaches to challenges in world health.

Van Reken deals primarily with the trend toward primary health care but also with tentmaking, short-term team approach, continuing education, board certification for physicians, public health training, family practice speciality, personnel changes, and nationalism. There is no mention of AIDS nor its significance to world health.

The book has no index but is clearly written and documented. Almost half of the references are to personal communication. Acronyms and abbreviations familiar to those involved in medical missions, such as MAP for Missionary Assistance Program, are left undefined for other readers.

This is physician-oriented but would be valuable reading for anyone involved in health care missionary endeavors. The author provides interdenominational as well as historical perspectives on medical missions that are international in scope.

*L. Patton is a medical doctor and Director of Health Services at Fresno Pacific College.*

**Mission in Asia.** By Stanley Shenk. Goshen, Ind.: Pinchpenny Press, 1988, 131 pp., \$6.50 (pb)

**Reviewed by Calvin E. Shenk**

*Mission in Asia* is the reflection of Stanley Shenk, a retired Goshen College Bible professor, after his nine-month teaching experience in Asia. Sponsored by Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Central Committee, the author visited Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Burma, India, Singapore, and Indonesia. This book contains edited excerpts from his journal. It is fascinating to read, with detailed descriptions and vivid impressions of people, events, places, and landscape.

This book should be read by persons considering overseas service. One finds here glimpses of culture shock, cultural differences, conflicts, and dynamics of in-

terpersonal relations that emerge from the daily routine of life. The author makes observations about food, language, education, and vocation, and comments on political, economic, and religious environment all set in the context of personal experience and response to culture. There is a delightful combination of seriousness and humor.

While this is not intended to be a book on mission philosophy or theology, the meaning of faith and how people from various religious traditions view Christianity are instructive. There are references to both success and failure in contextualization. There is realism about church dynamics—kinds of evangelism, aspects of conversion, leadership, leadership training, ethics, and the impact of varying theological traditions. The author responds with appreciation and balanced criticism.

This book is written with candor and realism, but some of his candor may not be appreciated by Asians who value cultural sensitivity, especially when specific persons are described. But North American readers will recognize some of their own, perhaps unspoken, feelings when they read this book.

*Calvin E. Shenk is chair of the Department of Bible and Religion at Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia.*

**Correction**

The ending paragraphs of the Editorial in the September 1989 *Mission Focus* were missing. The editorial is completed below:

A third reaction is to insist that a classical interpretation or system of work can guarantee a complete understanding and comprehensive application. We are called to respond in faith to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. But we claim too much when we insist we can interpret the fullness of God in Jesus Christ through our limited systems of thought. Each fresh attempt to grasp the meaning of God's coming to us in the Christ must be tested against its faithfulness to Scripture and whether it awakens further faith in God who alone can make all things new.

"Mission in Christ's Way" is that set before us in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth (John 20:19-22). It calls us to set aside the reductionisms identified above, for they create barriers that prevent the full work of God to be done in and through us.—Wilbert R. Shenk

Also note correction on page 56, second column, line 19. "Sugar" flour should read "super" flour.

# MISSION FOCUS INDEX

## Volume 17 (1989)

This index is divided into two main categories: (A) General Missions and (B) Area Studies. Each article is listed by author, title, and *Mission Focus* volume number and issue. In addition, each entry is assigned a number in *italic* for ease in cross-referencing. Please note that this index continues the indexes for volumes 1-10 found in the December 1982 issue; thereafter updated in the December issue of each volume of *Mission Focus*.

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Culture represents the sum of human strivings. There is never a time when the church is not called to stand against the flow of culture. But the direction and pace of that flow shifts over time. Culture is outside the "perfection of Christ" and does not acknowledge the lordship of Christ. Culture cannot redeem. At its best it can only preserve the status quo; and at its worst it can be the means of exploitation and destruction. The church must be vigilant lest it be taken captive by cultural forces, thus forfeiting its ability to witness to God's way.

The "Conference on Education for International Mission and Service" held at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, May 25-27, 1989, was an effort to assess the direction world culture is moving, asking what Christian faithfulness will mean in the coming decade and how we can prepare another generation of young people to serve as representatives of Jesus Christ in the world. Joining in the conversation were members of college and seminary faculties and students, mission and service administrators, board members, and workers. Altogether, 125 people participated in the two days of deliberations.

1. Where are we standing in 1989? This question can be answered in a variety of ways. The conferees were North American Christians and thus identified with the powerful and rich nations of the world. The conference took place as the final decade of the twentieth century approaches. The world system has gone through major jolts during this century: two world wars, two other major wars, many regional conflicts, the rise of new ideologies, the end of European colonialism, the emergence of two power blocs that are now losing their grip on their empires, transnational corporations whose holdings outstrip the economies of many nations, a global telecommunications system that provides immediacy without intimacy, and so on. It is a world that feels threat more than hope. It is a world absorbed in technique while starving for meaning. We are standing in a time when the Christian movement in the historic centers of Christian influence has lost its sense of direction and the initiative is being seized by Christians from other parts of the world or by other religions. Some would say that the church in the West has become increasingly irrelevant by virtue of its complicity in culture. Taking a sighting on where we currently stand will require asking the questions the Old Testament prophets and Jesus asked. It will involve thinking in counter-cultural terms. This means, quite simply, to view the world in the light of God's purposes in creation and redemption. This perspective is not world-denying but world-embracing as demonstrated in the death-defying, life-giving ministry of Jesus Christ.

2. What issues preoccupy us? The purpose of the

conference was to help educational institutions and program agencies get a new grip on the task that lies ahead. These are not times that make that easy. In contrast to the final decade of the nineteenth century, the twentieth finds the Western nations in a mood of introspection and self-preoccupation. The expansiveness and buoyancy of a century ago, the untarnished faith in progress, the conviction that the West was called to participate in a moral crusade to save the world—all this belongs to an era long gone. Even the fervor generated by the communist challenge in the twentieth century has abated as that system has been increasingly discredited. What, therefore, is the great new cause that can command our highest loyalty and focus our stewardship in the coming generation? The conference stopped short of giving us that fresh vision. But it did call us to move forward in growing openness to cooperate with fellow Christians throughout the world as we unite with them in fulfilling the commission Jesus gave to the whole church.

3. How do we train our youth for Christian discipleship? In her presentation, Nancy Heisey juxtaposed "nineteenth century commitment" alongside "twenty-first century perspective." In this way Heisey paid tribute to the standard set by those who pioneered in the mission of the church in the nineteenth century: the willingness to give everything, including life itself, for the Great Cause; the spirit of adventure that gave rise to new forms of ministry; setting standards of excellence and service that continue to inspire; the willingness to persevere against great odds. This spirit and such a standard never go out of style and never become obsolete. Christian discipleship has always been characterized by such qualities. Heisey called for the continued inculcation of just these qualities of mind, spirit, and faith. But educational preparation must also get the student ready for the context in which the service is to be rendered. We have no reason to expect the world will be more secure or at peace with itself in the next generation than it has in the past. Every indication is that the number of human beings on the face of this planet will continue to grow in many parts of the world. We also can expect urbanization to influence all of us in many ways. Religion is alive and well but religious traditions cannot escape the impact of cultural forces. This means society in the future may well be a seedbed for new religious forms and movements. Training needs to concentrate on those qualities of mind and values and commitment that will enable the individual to move into whatever situation Christian discipleship involves in a way that faithfully reflects the mind and values and commitment of Jesus Christ.

—Wilbert R. Shenk